

GENERALISSIMOS



OF THE
WESTERN
ROMAN
EMPIRE

JOHN
MICHAEL
O'FLYNN

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*Generalissimos of the
Western Roman Empire*

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Generalissimos of the Western Roman Empire

John Michael O'Flynn



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Cover photographs of ivory diptych, late fourth century, depicting Stilicho and his wife Serena and son Eucherius are reproduced courtesy of Hirmer Verlag, Munich.

To my father

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Preface

This study deals with the period in which eastern and western halves of the Roman Empire began going their separate ways, the one on the road to becoming the Byzantine Empire, the other on the road to the dissolution and chaos from which would emerge the political patterns of medieval and modern Europe. The nature and course of the strange relationship between the two parts, and the view that thoughtful individuals in each part took of the other and of the concept of empire, have attracted a good deal of scholarly attention. My aim in this book is to explore one single development that played a crucial role in furthering and finalizing that split, marking the end of antiquity and the birth of the middle ages.

Among the factors that differentiate East from West during this period, the sharply contrasting influence of barbarians in the two halves of the empire has been extensively noted in the standard historical handbooks, works like those of Hodgkin, Bury, Seeck, or Stein. The East had its powerful barbarian generals, just as did the West, during the reigns of the militarily feeble descendants of Theodosius the Great, but the anti-barbarian

reaction there was strong and, in the second half of the fifth century, the emperors reasserted themselves vigorously as the figures who commanded the allegiance of the troops.

In the West, on the other hand, the continued isolation of the emperors from an army that was becoming steadily more barbarian at all levels was accompanied by the progressive aggrandizement of the barbarian power within the imperial frontiers, a process that led to the ultimate dismemberment of the Western Empire. Of the highest importance in this development was that succession of powerful generals, either barbarians themselves or well acquainted with barbarians, who knew how to command the allegiance of the troops in the absence of militarily capable emperors. In a few early cases this absence was quite fortuitous: the death of a powerful soldier-emperor like Valentinian I or Theodosius I left the throne in the hands of successors who, by reason of age or personal character, were unable to play the role demanded by the situation. Later, however, this state of affairs was deliberately sought by certain generals as a key factor contributing to the position of power they were gradually formalizing, a power which would eventually supplant that of the emperors altogether. The exhaustive attention that certain scholars, especially of the German school, have given to questions of higher military organization has naturally included a study of the individuals with whom I am concerned in the present volume, and the phenomenon of the shift of supreme power from the person of the emperor to that of his chief commander has certainly been noticed by historians. Here, this phenomenon is isolated for specific study with a view to analyzing systematically the evolution of this new position of power and the methods used by its successive holders to consolidate and formalize it.

There never existed one distinct Latin term to designate the purely *de facto* position of power held by these generals; over the course of a century they were to use an assortment of terms, singly or in combination, to designate themselves, but none of these titles

was an original coinage, and the best known of them, "patrician," continued in use into a much later period. The modern historian feels the need of a single word to describe what was a single phenomenon, with a clearly defined beginning and end. For the purposes of the present work I therefore propose the term "generalissimo." It seems singularly appropriate to convey the impression of a supreme military commander who arrogates to himself, by wholly extra-constitutional means, the right to interfere, to whatever extent he sees fit, in matters pertaining to the civil domain.

The limits of the period under study are clearly definable. Prior to the death of Valentinian I, the emperors themselves were the supreme commanders, just as they had been since the days of Caesar and Augustus, and an ambitious general who considered himself more capable than the reigning Augustus would reach for the imperial purple himself, either as colleague of, or replacement for, the existing emperor. At the other end of this period, the kingship of Odovacar and the disappearance of western emperors clearly mark the culmination of the process of change; in the final chapter I consider whether this kingship represents an ambition that was clearly defined in Odovacar's mind from the beginning of his career, or, as seems more probable, was the product of the peculiar circumstances under which he won control of Italy, and, in particular, a result of the calculated ambiguity of the eastern government. When Theoderic was instigated by Zeno to attack Odovacar, it was with a view to replacing the latter as king of Italy, not to restoring a line of emperors in the West, and whatever diplomatic pretenses may have surrounded the relationship of Theoderic and his Ostrogothic successors with Constantinople, they were, in reality, just as independent as any of the other Germanic rulers of kingdoms that had been carved out of the former Western Empire.

In the creation of these various kingdoms and the ultimate disappearance of the Western Empire, the generalissimos were instrumental, though it seems safe to say that none of them, not

even Odovacar, was fully and consciously aware of where his policies would lead in the long run. Among the various modern approaches, there are two tendencies that have reached what one might call the point of passing judgment on these men. On the one hand, there is a tendency among British and German scholars, well exemplified by Bury and Seeck, to view the entire period in the light of what they know it led to, and thus to see the generalissimos as the agents of disintegration; throughout their work runs a harshly critical tone that tends to reach its climax in the treatment of Ricimer. At the other extreme there is a tradition of Italian scholarship that sees these men as the most progressive force of their time, and credits them with having aimed, quite consciously, at building a new society through the amalgamation of Germanic and Roman elements; this generally favorable Italian view tends to be shared, though to a lesser degree, by French and American scholars, and by that outstanding international figure, Ernest Stein. Both views are ultimately subjective, and, like all attempts to make value judgments about history, they represent the predispositions of those who make them: in the first case, a sense of regret at what was passing; in the second, a joyous anticipation of what was to spring into life from the decay of a worn-out society. A comprehensive study of the historiographical traditions bearing on this period is much needed, though it would teach us more about the age in which the historians lived than about that whose history they wrote. My aim in the present work has been to take a long enough view of a certain period to isolate and examine a trend, while resisting any inclination to make judgments about it. Such judgments can be made at none other than the level of the individual, and would necessitate seeing the world through the eyes of a Stilicho, an Aetius, or a Ricimer, and of no one else.

May 1982
Montreal

John M. O'Flynn

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Note on Translations

For the convenience of readers who may not be familiar with the Greek and Latin, translations of all block quotations in the text, and of the lengthier quotations in the Notes, are supplied in an appendix of translations near the back of the book. Except where otherwise acknowledged, the translations are my own.

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1 | *A Significant Shift of Command*

On 17 November 375, Valentinian I died of a stroke of apoplexy consequent upon a fit of rage at the insolent attitude of a group of barbarian envoys.¹ His younger brother Valens continued to rule the eastern portion of the Roman Empire, and as his successor in the West, Valentinian left his sixteen-year-old son Gratian, whom he had already proclaimed Augustus in 367.

A power struggle quickly erupted among the generals and officials in the West, precipitated, not surprisingly, by the vacuum that followed the sudden and unexpected death of an emperor who had maintained unquestioned control of that half of the empire for almost twelve years. The first victim was the distinguished general, Count Theodosius, executed at Carthage the following year on an unknown charge; his chief enemies were Maximinus, Romanus, Merobaudes, and Probus, and in grim foreshadowing of what the West was to experience for the next hundred years, they seem to have prevailed upon the inexperienced Gratian to authorize the execution.² Maximinus himself fell not long afterward, and the master of the situation was the general Merobaudes. The efforts of Merobaudes to consolidate

his position of power by legal and extra-legal means paved the way for a series of generals who were to play a leading role in the government of the West without reaching for the imperial purple; the youthful Gratian was the first in a series of emperors who were to be their puppets.

Merobaudes, who was of Frankish origin, is attested as an officer in Julian's army as far back as 363.³ By 375 he was an experienced soldier of Valentinian I, probably with the rank of *magister peditum*.⁴ Within a few days of Valentinian's death, he played a leading part in the elevation of the dead emperor's younger son to the title of Valentinian II.⁵ This move was carried out on the Danube frontier, where Valentinian I had been campaigning against the Quadi, and where he had been joined by his wife and younger son; it was prompted by the fear that if the troops were not quickly presented with an emperor from the family of Valentinian, they were going to acclaim Sebastian, Merobaudes' rival,⁶ for Gratian was far away at Trier. It represents a mixture of loyalty to the family of Valentinian and of self-interest on Merobaudes' part, for he evidently anticipated being able to exert considerable influence over the four- or five-year-old Valentinian II and his mother Justina in governing that portion of the West that would be allotted to them by Gratian. This piece of unauthorized emperor-making was well calculated to avert a usurpation by a commander who was not a member of the imperial family and the resultant possibility of civil war, and in this light it was accepted in good part by Gratian, and by his uncle Valens in Constantinople. Nevertheless, the elevation by a general of an emperor who, for reasons of age or military inexperience, would be unable to command an army, was an interesting precedent and would be repeated more than once in the course of the following century.

Merobaudes' great importance in the West during the following years is reflected in particular by his two consulates, held in 377 and 383.⁷ He was the first non-member of the imperial

family since the days of Constantine to hold this position more than once. The old and venerable office of consul had long ago become purely honorific; it conferred no actual additional power, but it was a mark of high prestige, and the leading generalissimos up to and including Aetius made a special point of holding more than a single consulate. There is even some evidence that Merobaudes may have been nominated for a third consulate, for the year 388, but committed suicide shortly thereafter;⁸ this is linked to the difficult question of his attitude toward the usurpation of Maximus.

Magnus Maximus, a Spanish officer stationed in Britain, determined to profit from the absence of a strong western emperor, and in 383 had himself proclaimed Augustus by the armies on the island. In the same year he went on easily to win control of Gaul, mainly because of Gratian's inability to command the allegiance of his troops.⁹ The chronicler Prosper Tiro (s.a. 384) states that Gratian's defeat at Paris at the hands of the usurper, which led to his death shortly thereafter, was due "*Merobaudis magistri militum proditione*." It seems entirely out of keeping with the policy of Merobaudes, insofar as it can be reconstructed, that, in the very year of his second consulate, he chose to abandon Gratian and Valentinian II, to whom he seems to have been genuinely devoted and under whom he was enjoying a highly successful career, in order to transfer his allegiance to a usurper who would surely have been much less amenable to his influence. The orator Pacatus, in a panegyric delivered six years later to congratulate Theodosius on his defeat of Maximus, declared that Merobaudes had been loved by Gratian, and had been forced to commit suicide; nowhere does he refer to him as a traitor.¹⁰ The most probable explanation is that Merobaudes went over, or tried to go over, to the side of Maximus only when he realized that Gratian had alienated his troops, who in turn transferred their allegiance to Maximus during several days of indecision when the armies faced each other at

Paris, a transfer which, given Maximus's enormous popularity, Merobaudes simply could not prevent. This could explain Prosper's statement of betrayal, and would also make the forced suicide understandable, for Maximus would hardly want on his side a man of Merobaudes' stature who had joined him unwillingly and at the last moment.¹¹ As a generalissimo, Merobaudes was very slightly ahead of his time, for he came to grief at the hands of a commander who did not shrink from the role of emperor.

Merobaudes had enjoyed considerable influence under the rule of Gratian, and it is worth considering what the actual roots of his power were and whether he did anything to enhance his position in a legal or constitutional direction. His consulates conferred honor and prestige; they reflected his power but did not create it. His actual power rested upon his control of the troops, and was formalized by the military *magisterium* that had been conferred on him. This arrangement, by which the high command was divided between a master of the infantry and a master of the cavalry, had been part of Constantine's reforms. In the years between his death and the end of the fourth century, the system underwent a process of development and evolution as successive emperors strove to cope with the contingencies and emergencies that arose, in the context of an empire that was splitting into East and West.

The details of this process, and the actual dating of the major changes, are not always clear,¹² but a considerable light is shed upon the situation that had been reached by the end of the fourth or early fifth century by the *Notitia Dignitatum*.¹³ In the *Notitia*, the *magister peditum praesentalis* of the western high command holds a position of clear supremacy over the rest of the western military establishment.¹⁴ This supremacy may date back to the very creation of the *magisterium*,¹⁵ though this seems hardly likely in the light of Constantine's intentions in carrying out his reforms. The principle of collegiality was a long-standing Roman tradition, and it should be remembered that

Constantine created the *magistri militum* precisely to remove military power from the praetorian prefect, who, by his day, had grown dangerously powerful: had he given one of the *magistri* a permanently established supremacy over his colleague, he would simply have been recreating the same danger under a new title. Indeed, the very purpose of splitting the command of the infantry from that of the cavalry was to render either group incapable of functioning effectively without the other; an effective military operation would require coordination by a supreme commander above the level of the *magistri*, and that commander was to be the emperor himself. In the course of the fourth century, the rigid separation of the infantry and the cavalry commands fell into abeyance; in the various contingencies the armies had to face, it was found necessary for the *magistri*, and for various lesser commanders as well, to have at their disposal units of both infantry and cavalry. The result was that the titles “magister peditum” and “magister equitum” lost their literal meaning; although their continued official existence is attested by the *Notitia*, they seem, in practice, to have been replaced by other titles. Thus, there are variants such as “magister equitum et peditum,” “magister utriusque militiae,” or the simple “magister militum”; in certain cases the same man is referred to differently in several sources.¹⁶

The most reasonable conclusion is that people could not or did not bother to make what had become a totally fictitious distinction, since, until the ascendancy of Merobaudes, the *magistri* were essentially equal. There is not even any proof that the preeminence Merobaudes won for his office of *magister peditum* was ever, in his time, legally formalized. The barbarian troops always tended to throw their support behind the ablest commander, which is why militarily incapable emperors could never rid themselves of the incubus of a *generalissimo*, though they sometimes tried dismissing and even killing them. This *de facto* supremacy of the ablest general was further supported by

such prestige as derived from seniority of service and from consulates, to which must be added, at a later date, relationship to the imperial family (starting with Stilicho) and the patriciate (starting with Constantius III). Merobaudes provided a precedent in the West for the idea that the most capable commander could become a sort of *primus inter pares*, but this could surely have been done by either of the *magistri praesentales*. The formal privileges attaching to the office of *magister peditum*, as reflected in the *Notitia*, were probably the result of a long process finalized by Stilicho. Between the supremacy of Merobaudes and that of Stilicho is a direct line of development, but that line is attached to the role they played, not to the rank of *magister peditum*; in the intervening years, the same role was played by two other men, Bauto and Arbogast, who were, in fact, *magistri equitum*.¹⁷

Bauto, like Merobaudes and Arbogast, was a Frank.¹⁸ He is first mentioned as having been sent by Gratian with an army to assist Theodosius. In the desperate period following the defeat and death of Valens at the hands of the Visigoths at Adrianople in 378, Gratian had summoned Theodosius from retirement and had proclaimed him Augustus on 19 January 379, giving him charge over Valens's former territory together with the dioceses of Dacia and Macedonia.¹⁹ The mission of Bauto must have taken place in or around 380, at which time Theodosius was employing all his military genius to save the situation in the Balkan area; at this stage Bauto already held the rank of *magister equitum*.²⁰ In 383, after Gratian's death, Bauto was back in Italy in the service of Valentinian II, defending the Alpine passes against a threatened attack by the emperor Maximus.²¹ From this point on, he seems to have virtually ruled Valentinian's portion of the empire on the boy's behalf; Maximus accused him, probably with some justification, of simply seeking power for himself under the guise of ruling for the boy.²² He seems to have aimed at keeping the favor of Ambrose, the powerful bishop of Milan, and this would have greatly strengthened his

position at Valentinian's court; although a pagan himself, Bauto seems to have supported Ambrose's rejection of the request by Symmachus in 384 for restoration of the Altar of Victory in the Roman senate house, ordered removed by Gratian in 381 as an anti-pagan measure.²³ Nevertheless, he apparently enjoyed the friendship of the traditionally minded senator Symmachus, and he had his daughter, Aelia Eudoxia, so thoroughly educated as a Roman that she later became wife of Arcadius and empress of the East, and was closely associated with the anti-German reaction in Constantinople.²⁴ In 385 Bauto held the consulate, the culmination of his public recognition.²⁵ This is the last notice of him; he must have died at some point before 388, because by that year his place had been taken by the next generalissimo, Arbogast.

Like his two predecessors, Arbogast was a Frank.²⁶ Early references to him indicate that he was a subordinate of Bauto when that general was sent by Gratian to assist Theodosius in or about 380.²⁷ Following Bauto's death, some time between 385 and 388, Arbogast took over his command, not on the appointment of the emperor but on the acclamation of the troops.²⁸ This became quite usual in the following century: the real ruler had been Bauto, not the youthful Valentinian, and on Bauto's death the succession to his position of supremacy went to the next most powerful commander. Bauto may even have designated Arbogast as his successor.

In 388 Arbogast was one of Theodosius's commanders in his campaign against Maximus, and to him fell the task of crushing the final resistance in Gaul and killing Flavius Victor, the son of Maximus, whom the usurper had elevated as co-Augustus.²⁹ Theodosius evidently felt fully confident of Arbogast's loyalty, for he designated him to manage the affairs of the young Valentinian, who was sent to Gaul as nominal ruler of the portion of the empire just recaptured from Maximus, while Theodosius himself remained for a time in Italy; this can only be interpreted as a ratification by Theodosius of Arbogast's tenure of the *magisterium*.³⁰

In this position Arbogast went from strength to strength. At the military level, he carried out a highly successful campaign against the Franks,³¹ but, like the other generalissimos, he was not content to wield supreme power in merely military matters. He gradually filled important positions with friends—fellow Franks and men he felt he could trust—and thus brought the entire administration under his control. He kept Valentinian under such a degree of supervision in his court at Vienne, in southern Gaul, that the young emperor was virtually his prisoner.³² Although Italy, Africa, and Illyricum passed under the sway of Valentinian with the return of Theodosius to Constantinople in 391,³³ Valentinian was never permitted to leave Vienne. The deteriorating relations between the emperor, now a young man, and his *magister militum* were further aggravated by a religious conflict, for Valentinian's religious views were becoming progressively more orthodox, and he had become a strong admirer of Ambrose.³⁴ Arbogast, on the other hand, was a pagan, and was regarded as a bulwark by the beleaguered pagan party in the senate;³⁵ when, after the departure of Theodosius, the pagan senators sent a delegation to Vienne in yet another attempt to obtain the restoration of the Altar of Victory in the senate house, Valentinian overruled the wishes of Arbogast and certain other members of his consistory, and insisted on rejecting the request.³⁶

As Arbogast's power increased, he swept out of the way anyone who opposed him, though it is probable that many of the individuals he removed were "corrupt and avaricious men, who had abused the opportunities afforded them by the long minority of the Sovereign";³⁷ Arbogast, it seems, would not brook anyone other than himself taking advantage of the situation. On one occasion he slew with his own hands a certain Harmonius, one of Valentinian's intimate counsellors, who had taken refuge under the purple cloak of the emperor. Valentinian, unable to bear the domination of his *magister militum*, appealed for help to

Theodosius;³⁸ finding that his pleas were fruitless, he determined to flee to Constantinople. As an excuse for leaving Vienne, he planned an expedition to protect Italy from a barbarian threat. It is also distinctly possible that he hoped to win the allegiance of the troops by gaining some military laurels and thereby provide himself with a counterbalance to the power of his *magister militum*.³⁹ Before he could set out, however, Arbogast intervened and forbade him to leave.⁴⁰ When Valentinian tried to assert himself and exercise what he considered to be his right to dismiss Arbogast from his post, he made the bitter discovery, to be repeated by other western emperors in the course of the next century, that his *generalissimo* was too powerful to be thus shaken off. Arbogast tore up the notice of dismissal and threw the fragments on the ground with the curt remark that Valentinian had not given him his post and therefore could not take it from him.⁴¹ These words can be interpreted to mean that Arbogast preferred to think that he was taking his orders from Theodosius, who was conveniently remote in Constantinople and could not participate in the day-to-day affairs of the West; on the other hand, Arbogast's remarks could be a not very subtle reference to the fact that in the beginning he owed his position as *generalissimo* to the acclamation of his troops. In either case it is evident how far the new position of power had evolved. The realization of his impotence drove Valentinian to an act of fury or despair: he attempted to seize a sword from one of his guards, possibly intending to rush upon Arbogast and slay him (as Valentinian III was later to do with Aetius), but he was forcibly restrained. When Arbogast asked him what he had meant to do with the sword, however, he replied that he had intended it for himself because, though emperor, he was powerless to impose his own will.⁴²

The struggle came to an end on 15 May 392⁴³ when Valentinian's body was discovered, apparently hanged, in the palace at Vienne. Sources for this occurrence are contradictory and

inconclusive, and have given rise to an enormous amount of scholarly controversy as to whether Valentinian took his own life, or was murdered on the orders of Arbogast, or was murdered without Arbogast's instigation.⁴⁴ After Theodosius had come forward as Valentinian's avenger and Arbogast had died a traitor, the latter's guilt was widely assumed, and seems to have become the official version (though there are widely varying accounts of how he had the crime carried out). Other authorities, however, take a more guarded approach, and there is even reason to believe that Ambrose himself changed his own verdict from murder to suicide.⁴⁵ While a solid conclusion is impossible, it is difficult to imagine what Arbogast could have hoped to gain by murdering Valentinian, but it is clear that he would have lost something he evidently enjoyed and valued very highly, namely the confidence of Theodosius. There is a temptation to draw dangerously close analogies with the later generalissimo Ricimer and to assume that Arbogast simply rid himself of a troublesome emperor so that he could elevate a more amenable one, or perhaps even rule without one. The substantial differences between the situation of Arbogast and that of Ricimer or Odovacar, however, should not be overlooked. In Arbogast's day the position of generalissimo was considerably less clearly defined or evolved than was the case in the second half of the following century, the position of western emperor considerably less debased, and the cleavage between East and West considerably less advanced. Furthermore, Valentinian II was the brother-in-law of Theodosius, and Theodosius, who had only returned to the East in the previous year, might be expected to come back at any time. He had already, some years before, associated his elder son, Arcadius, with himself as Augustus in Constantinople, and clearly intended to do the same eventually with his younger son, Honorius.⁴⁶ If a vacancy occurred on the western throne, Theodosius would surely either return to the West and take it for himself or install one of his sons there; in either case he would not

have required the services of Valentinian's murderer. That Arbogast did not, at first, intend to raise a new puppet and extract a settlement from Theodosius by force, much less take the throne for himself, is made clear by the fact that after Valentinian's death he sent an embassy of churchmen to Theodosius to protest his innocence of the young emperor's death and to request that he might be permitted to rule the West as Theodosius's lieutenant.⁴⁷ To further show his loyalty, he seems to have had coins minted bearing the effigy of Arcadius.⁴⁸ At this stage the death of Valentinian was a positive embarrassment to Arbogast.

It was only on 22 August, after a delay of three months, that Arbogast took the step of raising a western emperor of his own.⁴⁹ Theodosius had apparently maintained silence despite Arbogast's friendly overtures, but continued with his energetic anti-pagan legislation. During the summer, Theodosius removed from office the praetorian prefect at Rome, Nicomachus Flavianus, a prominent pagan and friend of Arbogast,⁵⁰ and the following month saw the fall of another prominent pagan, Tatianus, the praetorian prefect at Constantinople, together with his son, Proculus, who was urban prefect in the same city.⁵¹ During the course of the summer, Arbogast must have realized that he was a likely target and that he would have to take more energetic steps to secure his position. He needed a new emperor who, through inexperience in military matters, could never endanger his own power, but would be respectable enough to request, or, as the case might be, demand recognition from Theodosius as his colleague. His choice fell upon Flavius Eugenius, a civil servant and professor of rhetoric, and, significantly enough, a Christian, albeit a nominal one, at the time of his elevation.⁵² Although it became ever more apparent that Arbogast would have to fight to defend his position, he seems to have tried, whenever possible, to leave the door open to a reconciliation with Theodosius, whom he never ceased to regard as the repository of imperial legitimacy. Eugenius, as coin and inscription

evidence shows, recognized Theodosius and Arcadius as his co-rulers (though apparently he never so recognized Honorius).⁵³

Theodosius, however, continued his persecution of paganism, and on 8 November he made his most sweeping move of all when he announced that any celebration of pagan cult by any person whomsoever was prohibited.⁵⁴ In the meantime he had taken an evasive attitude toward the embassy that Eugenius had sent requesting recognition,⁵⁵ but his intention was finally made clear at the beginning of 393. He nominated one of his generals to occupy the consulate along with himself, although custom was that a new emperor should be consul in the year following his accession to the throne. Eugenius had no choice but to nominate himself consul nonetheless, specifying Theodosius as his colleague, but he received recognition only in those areas under his control.⁵⁶ In the East slow but relentless preparations for a civil war began, and early in 393 Theodosius raised his younger son, Honorius, to the purple, evidently destining him as ruler of the West.⁵⁷ Arbogast, for his part, after conducting a campaign along the Rhine, concluded a treaty with the Franks permitting him to reinforce his army with recruits from their numbers.⁵⁸

While there still remained some hope for a peaceful settlement, Arbogast and Eugenius had tried to satisfy both Christians and pagans by adopting a policy of complete toleration. As a step toward conciliating Theodosius, they had tried, though unsuccessfully, to win the favor of Ambrose, and had twice replied negatively to senatorial delegations requesting the restoration of the Altar of Victory and of the official pagan cult at Rome. Then, as hopes of peace receded, they came out openly in favor of the restoration of paganism, and acceded to all the requests of the pagan senatorial faction; this is to be viewed as a desperate attempt to consolidate whatever support they could get, rather than as a scheme to stage a pagan revival at what was surely a most inopportune moment.⁵⁹ By the spring of 394

Theodosius was ready to lead his expedition to the West. Arbogast determined to ambush Theodosius's army in the narrow valley of the Frigidus leading down from the Julian Alps, the northeast gateway of Italy. The final battle at the Frigidus, on 5 and 6 September 394, has been presented in the Christian tradition as a crucial combat between the forces of darkness and of light. The figure of Hercules on the banners of Arbogast's troops, and the statues of Jupiter clutching a golden thunderbolt, which had been placed on the mountain ledges overlooking the spot Arbogast had chosen for the battle, did not avail against the ferocious wind, the local Bora, which gave the victory to Theodosius. Eugenius was captured and slain, and Arbogast fled into the hills, where he wandered for two days before taking his own life.⁶⁰

Theodosius himself did not survive the battle by many months. As soon as possible after his victory, he had Honorius brought from Constantinople and securely installed him as emperor in the West. The ten-year-old boy was placed under the care of Theodosius's beloved niece and adoptive daughter, Serena,⁶¹ and her husband, the young general Stilicho, who had fought under Theodosius at the Frigidus. Theodosius conferred the rank of western *magister peditum* upon Stilicho, clearly hoping that the loyalty of Arbogast's successor would be secured by reason of his relationship by marriage to the imperial family. Theodosius took ill during the course of the victory celebrations at Milan, and died on 17 January of the following year.⁶²

2 | *The Roots of Stilicho's Power*

The death of Theodosius left Stilicho in a singularly strong position. In the first place, the practice had developed in the West, during the period between 375 and 394, for one of the *magistri militum praesentales* to occupy a position of supremacy over his supposed colleague and the rest of the military establishment, culminating in the particularly blatant power of Arbogast. This precedent paved the way for the special concentration of power that Stilicho achieved.

Second, the eastern troops that Theodosius, in the last year of his life, had led west in the campaign against Eugenius, had not been returned to the East but, along with the western troops that had followed Eugenius, had been left under the command of Stilicho. This concentration of eastern and western forces in the hands of one man was never achieved again;¹ what use Stilicho was able to make of it is considered in Chapter 3. In contrast to this formidable power was the position of Rufinus, whom Theodosius left as guardian of Arcadius and manager of affairs in the East. Theodosius seems actually to have held Rufinus in higher esteem than Stilicho, making him

consul in 392,² an honor that Stilicho never received in Theodosius's lifetime, but Rufinus was a purely civilian administrator, praetorian prefect of the East, with no troops under his direct control.

A third factor that contributed to Stilicho's strength was his marriage in about 384 to Theodosius's niece and adoptive daughter Serena.³ This marriage into the imperial family, giving him *parentela* with the young emperors Arcadius and Honorius, was one of Stilicho's trump cards whose usefulness he never ceased to exploit. In addition to the constant repetition this subject receives in the verses of Claudian, Stilicho styled himself on inscriptions "adfinis divi Theodosii Augusti" or "progener divi Theodosii"⁴ (in this latter case the Theodosius in question is Count Theodosius, father of the emperor).

The fourth cornerstone of Stilicho's exceptional strength in 395 was his claim that Theodosius, on his deathbed, had appointed Stilicho guardian not only of Honorius in the West but of Arcadius in the East. The plausibility and the implications of this claim are questionable, but the fact that in making it he received the support of so prominent a figure as Ambrose, the Archbishop of Milan, lent it an air of respectability.

Stilicho's career had been from the beginning a military one. This, indeed, was the only door open to one of his extraction, for he was *semibarbarus*: his father had been a Vandal and his mother a Roman.⁵ His father had commanded a squadron of cavalry in the time of Valens,⁶ presumably a Vandal squadron. Stilicho began his military career in the élite corps of *protectores*, where only young Romans of good birth and barbarian nobles could serve.⁷ Moving up the ranks he first became, presumably, tribune, and then tribune and notary,⁸ which attached him directly to the imperial general staff. In this capacity he was part of a diplomatic mission that went to the Persian court in 383–84.⁹ Following the successful completion of this mission, the marriage of Stilicho with Serena took place.

An attractive suggestion is that the choice of Stilicho as husband must have been made by Serena herself; it is hardly likely that Theodosius would have chosen for her this young and quite undistinguished officer.¹⁰ After the marriage, however, Stilicho's career was assured, for Theodosius evidently set about to raise his son-in-law steadily to the level of Serena. Thus Stilicho was promoted in a very short space of time, on the strength of remarkably little actual soldiering, through a series of intermediate ranks culminating in the exalted position of *magister militum*.

It is impossible to trace with certainty the exact stages of Stilicho's earlier career. This is due not only to the calculated vagueness of Claudian and the carelessness of Zosimus, but to imprecision in the use of titles and terms of rank, even in inscriptions and in the *adscriptiones* of laws at this time, an indication possibly of a state of flux in the hierarchy, or of uncertainty in people's minds as to the exact meaning of a particular title or the exact powers attached to a particular post.¹¹

It is no accident that in this same age Stilicho was able to use the apparently innocuous term *parens principum* as a sort of mysterious title that embodied his claim to supreme power in the empire, both East and West, a power surpassing that attached to the title "Augustus." In the course of the fifth century, subtle shifts in the meaning of various terms occur as later *generalissimos* invent their own equivalent of Stilicho's *parens principum*, titles sufficiently vague to mean anything they want to make them mean while causing offense to nobody. Words begin to take on a magic power of their own and mock the efforts of scholars to tie them down and organize them into a rigid *cursus honorum*.

With regard to Stilicho's early career, there has understandably been some difference of opinion among scholars. At one extreme it has been proposed that the narrowest possible interpretation be given to Zosimus's statement that when Stilicho

died he had been general for twenty-three years:

τρεις δὲ πρὸς τοῖς εἴκοσιν ἐνιαυτοὺς ἑστρατηγικῶς
(5.34).

This would then be taken to mean that Stilicho had reached the rank of *magister militum* by 385-86,¹² an impossibly rapid promotion. The view of most scholars seems to be that the word “ἑστρατηγικῶς” is to be taken more widely, and that, in addition to the *magisterium*, it can refer to the subsidiary military rank of *comes*.¹³ It seems, in fact, that in fairly quick succession Stilicho was made *comes stabuli sacri* and *comes domesticorum*;¹⁴ this latter post, being that of chief or one of the chiefs of the imperial guard, was quite important, and almost certainly it is this to which Zosimus alludes. Probably, Stilicho attained the *magisterium* with his own military command only after the death of Promotus in 392.¹⁵ From July 393 he is styled “*comes et magister utriusque militiae*”;¹⁶ this is the earliest definite reference to his tenure of this rank. Even so, this is a particularly rapid promotion for an inexperienced man.

In 394, at the time of the expedition against Eugenius, Stilicho came west with Theodosius,¹⁷ and remained there after the emperor's death in the capacity of supreme military commander and guardian of the young Honorius. Thus arose the unusual circumstance that his career was lifted out of the context of the eastern military establishment and moved to the West, where things were done in a substantially different way. It was in the East that Stilicho originally received his promotion to the *magisterium*, and there he certainly enjoyed no sort of primacy among his colleagues, for Theodosius had thoroughly reorganized the eastern armies in or soon after 388. Under the new system, five equally ranked generals held the title “*magister utriusque militiae*”; two of them commanded palatine troops and were styled *praesentales*, while the other three led the field armies of Thrace, Illyricum, and the

eastern frontier. The significant feature is the absolute equality of their power; each of them, as their title implies, commanded a mixed force of horse and foot of approximately equal size.¹⁸ In the West, following the earlier Constantinian system, the two *magistri praesentales* were still sometimes styled *magister peditum* and *magister equitum*, and their spheres of activity covered the entire West and overlapped completely. Although there is no evidence that up to this time any formal change had been made in their theoretical equality, the practice had grown up over the previous two decades that one of them should exercise a decided *de facto* supremacy. Barred as he was from return to the East by the indifference of Arcadius and the hostility of Arcadius's successive ministers, Stilicho now had to pursue his career in this western context.

In 395 Stilicho had come from the East as *magister utriusque militiae*; according to the terms of this title he was a commander of foot and horse, though with the very specific limitations that applied to that command in the East. In the West, however, the supreme command was only theoretically divided between two *magistri*. In practice, a precedent existed for one of them to hold a primacy over the other and to regard a weak emperor as a puppet. On top of this, Theodosius's premature death had left Stilicho in sole command of a substantial combined eastern and western army, and with a burning ambition to march back to the East and take both parts of the empire under his guidance. The gradual modification of this ambition over the remaining years of his life and the role he played in the western military establishment during these thirteen years must be considered in the light of the specific potentialities and anomalies of the circumstances in 395.

The prime source of information about the military establishment in this period is the *Notitia Dignitatum*; comparison with information from other sources has caused some problems for scholars. The *Notitia*, in its western section, describes a

situation in which the magister peditum was the predominant military figure. Under his command were placed such subsidiary generals as the *comites rei militaris*, who were in charge of the regional groupings of *comitatenses*, and the *duces*, who commanded the old frontier legions, the *limitanei* or *ripenses*. Furthermore, the leading administrative figures in the *officia* of most of these counts and dukes (the *princeps*, *commentariensis*, and two *numerarii*) were appointed annually from the *officia* of the *magistri praesentales*. The situation is workable only if it is assumed that the magister equitum was a subordinate of the magister peditum. What is known of Stilicho's military position from other sources follows.¹⁹

The *magisterium utriusque militiae*, which Stilicho received in the East not later than July 393, is carried over into the West, and the words "magister utriusque militiae" form the basis of his commonest title in inscriptions and in the adscriptiones of laws, though one inscription uses the somewhat more old-fashioned "magister equitum peditumque."²⁰ Further evidence of the imprecision of this sort of titulature comes from certain other constitutions that address him as *magister militum* or comes et *magister militum*;²¹ although these last do not specify that he is *praesentalis*, their text implies that he is in possession of the full range of powers that pertained to the magister peditum *praesentalis*, according to the *Notitia Dignitatum*.

Attempts to see a rigid pattern in all this terminology, and to translate and interpret the titles literally, have led to difficulties. Taken at face value, the titles would seem to imply that in Stilicho were combined the two former western military posts of magister peditum *praesentalis* and magister equitum *praesentalis*. This, however, is further confused by evidence that at certain times, at least, there was a separate magister equitum, for two different individuals are known to have held this position: Jacobus in 401 and Vincentius in 408.²² These men are obscure figures and were clearly of little military

importance beside Stilicho, but they constitute a flaw in the pattern. What is meant by the repeated use by Stilicho of the title “magister utriusque militiae”? An examination of dates, or conjectured dates, for the uses of the various titles mentioned, and of the widely spaced dates at which the two *magistri equitum* are attested, does not reveal any useful chronological pattern. Solutions to the problem are varied; they include suggestions that in the specific case of Stilicho the term “magister utriusque militiae” indicated a union in one person of the two normal commands of *magister peditum* and *magister equitum*, even though he may have had a subordinate cavalry commander; that it was a special title that could occasionally be given to the *magister peditum*, perhaps in his capacity as supreme military commander; and even that it represented a special rank above that of *magister peditum* and *magister equitum*, though it might be occupied by one of these men.²³

Most of these theories presuppose a carefully defined system into which Stilicho fitted himself as he rose to the highest rank, and involve a distortion in emphasis rather than an outright misunderstanding of the facts. Examination of the western part of the *Notitia* shows that it could not represent the situation that existed at one single point in time, but rather that it consists of a series of accretions, built up over more than a quarter of a century. The supreme western command, as outlined in the *Notitia*, shows the result of a gradual, carefully developed process stretching over the entire period of Stilicho’s western career.²⁴ There has been a tendency to view this as a carefully thought-out, step-by-step process that Stilicho had not even completed in all its details by the time of his fall, but with a slight shift in emphasis it can also be viewed as his gradual and reluctant acceptance of the fact that he was likely to be excluded for a very long time from his eastern ambitions, and for his own security would have to consolidate his position in the West by bringing the military establishment there more and more firmly under his personal control.

In any case, the *Notitia Dignitatum* points clearly to the supremacy in the West of the *magister peditum praesentalis*; the entire provincial military organization of the *comites* and *duces* was under his control. This arrangement was enhanced by the practice of appointing the principal administrators to the offices of these subordinate commanders from the office of the *magister peditum* himself. The policy of centralizing the western military administration and bringing it under one man's control is clear. That this one man should be the *magister peditum* can hardly be due to any sort of inherent primacy of infantry over cavalry; in the years 383-94 the *magister equitum praesentalis* held the primacy over his nominal colleague. It is true that Stilicho was never actually referred to as *magister peditum*, but he clearly enjoyed the privileges that, according to the terms of the *Notitia*, pertain to that office, and this switch in primacy from the *magister equitum* to the *magister peditum* can only have been due to his wishes. *Magister utriusque militiae* is a more high-sounding title,²⁵ but, in addition, is actually more appropriate in view of the fact that, since the time of Constantine's sons, all *magistri*, palatine or regional, commanded units of both foot and horse. It was already current in the East, where Stilicho had obtained it, and it was used (alongside other titles, of course) for all regional commands. Stilicho is simply the first attested case of a western *magister praesentalis* to whom this particular title is applied. If there was a certain looseness in titulature at the highest level, this had already existed prior to Stilicho,²⁶ and is certainly not to be ascribed to him. In a similar way, if the legalities of his position vis-à-vis Arcadius and Honorius are far from being a model of clarity, this is not entirely due to his own (or Claudian's) efforts at mystification; a good deal of the blame must be laid at Theodosius's door.

Stilicho had gone beyond the formal career patterns of his day, and, far from stepping into a ready-made position, he

created a special place for himself out of the raw materials that the circumstances offered. A precedent for his supremacy already existed in the careers of Merobaudes, Bauto, and Arbogast, and following the pattern of Merobaudes, Stilicho held the consulate twice, in 400 and in 405.²⁷ His efforts from 395 until his death were devoted to consolidating and formalizing his position, and removing something of its character as a purely *de facto* supremacy. His most effective legal tool for achieving this goal was his gradual reform of the military administration so as to bring it firmly under his power. Eventually, all military (and, for that matter, civil) positions of importance were filled with Stilicho's nominees; it is interesting to note that the first move against him in the revolt of 408 was the massacre of a number of major ministers and officials, who clearly were, or were regarded as, his creatures.²⁸ In addition to his control over the regular army, there is evidence that Stilicho, following a practice of increasing frequency at the time, maintained a private bodyguard of *buccellarii*. Various of Stilicho's high officials maintained similar private armies, which, if needed, could be placed at Stilicho's disposal, and by the time of his death he had evidently constructed an elaborate system of supporters and hangers-on stretching from high officials down to the lowliest *buccellarii*.²⁹

It might seem that the easiest way for Stilicho to consolidate his power would have been to take the classic step of making himself Augustus, and indeed it was alleged after his death that he had been planning to do so. The next generalissimo, Constantius, did just that. It was not necessary, at that time, to eliminate the reigning Augustus in order to take the purple, and it is commonly supposed that Stilicho's "semi-barbarian" background made him hesitate to take this step himself. A.H.M. Jones, however, observes that Stilicho and his successors in the fifth century actually chose not to become emperors, wanting instead to remain close to the troops, who

were the real source of power.³⁰ After 395 it was unusual for an emperor to lead the troops, and ambitious men in the West no longer aspired to become emperor; already, in 392, Arbogast had preferred to raise a non-military figure to the throne rather than take the honor for himself. The emperor still occupied the most honorific and ceremonial-bound position in the state, but his power was a mere shadow of what was once denoted by the word “*imperium*.” While people prostrated themselves before him, someone else behind the scenes manipulated the machinery. Merobaudes, Bauto, and Arbogast had stumbled upon a realization of this new order of things; Stilicho had grasped it fully by 395, and his whole career was built around it. Just as, after the fall of the Republic, the *princeps* represented a new and not clearly defined focus of power, so now, at the end of the fourth century, a new position of power higher than that of Augustus made its appearance.

This position in Stilicho's time was so new that no one had as yet invented a name for it. Stilicho was *comes* and *magister utriusque militiae*, terms which had a clearly defined military significance, and these ranks were likewise held by the later *generalissimos* of the fifth century, but military terminology alone was not adequate to define the new position. In Stilicho's eyes, his own unique authority sprang from his *parentela* with the reigning emperors, and he used the term *parens principum* in a specially pregnant sense;³¹ it was the nearest he came to putting a specific label on his position, and this “*parens*” is carefully preserved in the terminology used by his successors, who are regularly styled “*parens patriciusque noster*” (i.e. “of the emperor”), distinguished from the various other *parentes* and *patricii* that the emperor might have.³² Stilicho apparently did not use the title “*patricius*,”³³ but his use of *parens* is clearly a stage in the evolution of a title. Similarly, his scrupulous obedience to the wishes of the two emperors, typified in the last resort by his calm acceptance of death, is only a phase in the

evolution of this position of power. Arbogast's truculent attitude toward his emperor gives an even truer foretaste of what will happen before a century has passed: one of his successors, tired of seeing puppet emperors set up and knocked down, will decide that an emperor is superfluous, and Italy will see her first king in many centuries.

3 | *Stilicho and the Barbarians*

Certain writers have suggested that Stilicho was a mediocre soldier who owed his advancement solely to his marriage with Theodosius's adoptive daughter; it has even been remarked that this fact provided Theodosius with the reassurance that he could entrust his sons to Stilicho without fearing usurpations.¹ More recently, a new and even more searching look has been taken at Stilicho's military capacities, and doubt has even been cast on his ability to control his troops.² On the other hand, he has been described as more of a soldier than a diplomat by nature,³ and the generally held and clearly plausible view is that one of the reasons for his powerful position in the West was the military might he commanded. It is possible, however, that in the early part of his career Stilicho did not have the opportunity to win the military renown that might have enabled him to step with ease into Arbogast's shoes. In addition, after 395 Stilicho's difficulty in obtaining an adequate and fully coherent force of reliable troops hindered his military efforts and made him reluctant to engage in major battles until the time came when he was forced to fend off invasions of Italy itself.

The promotions and honors heaped upon Stilicho after his marriage with Serena did not, for quite some time, include an opportunity to lead an army in an actual campaign. It seems as if Theodosius wished to keep Stilicho close at hand in honorific and palatine positions. Two inscriptions erected in the period of Stilicho's supremacy refer to him as "comes divi Augusti Theodosii in omnibus bellis atque victoriis" and "bellorum omnium et victoriarum adfini etiam divi Theodosii Augusti,"⁴ and this theme is repeated several times by Claudian, who implies, without going into detail, that Stilicho's important part in the major victories of Theodosius was well known.⁵ Theodosius's intention to honor Stilicho and have him present on important occasions is obvious. Equally striking, however, is the absence of any notable military exploits performed by Stilicho that might justify his promotion to a high rank; and the fact that Theodosius, while clearly wishing to honor him, regularly passed him over in his choice of active generals in favor of Richomeres, Promotus, or Timasius,⁶ is highly significant. Claudian, referring to these years, assures that Stilicho

. . . sic gessit honores,
ut semper merito princeps cum magna dedisset,
deberet maiora tamen (*Laus Ser.* 194 ff.)

and goes on to inform, without at first citing any instances,

. . . Si bellica nubes
ingrueret, quamvis annis et iure minori
cedere grandaevos equitum peditumque magistros
adspiceres totumque palam permittere Martem,
nec gradus aetatisque pudor senioribus obstat,
ne iuveni parere velint. (*Ibid.* 196 ff.)

Some lines later, after the distraction of an elaborate Homeric simile, this grand generalization is boiled down to one concrete instance:

Haud aliter Stilicho, fremuit cum Thracia belli
tempestas, cunctis pariter cedentibus unus
eligitur ductor. (Ibid. 207 ff.)

One can hardly avoid the feeling that Stilicho's official propagandist⁷ is protesting too much. Stilicho's lack of military prestige in those first years after promotion to the *magisterium* seems to have been a source of embarrassment even in later years.

This one exploit in Thrace, which took place in 392, is taken up by Claudian elsewhere and dressed in epic terms.⁸ Rufinus, who, more than most other administrators or generals, seems to have enjoyed the confidence of Theodosius in those last years of the emperor's life, is accused by Claudian of having planned to betray the empire to the barbarians by stirring up the Bastarnae, or, according to Claudian's more grandiose account, Getae, Sarmatians, Dacians, Massagetae, Alans, and Geloni. How a civilian administrator living in Constantinople succeeded in raising such a horde, and how he planned to summon the Huns from the "utmost regions of Scythia," is not explained, nor does Claudian specify whether Rufinus's plot was part of his general fiendishness or a complicated way of getting rid of his rival Promotus.⁹

In one version Stilicho scattered the enemy and avenged Promotus. Only a weakened portion of the barbarians remained, and Stilicho could easily have defeated them, when Rufinus, by tricking Theodosius, delayed the battle in the hope of reinforcing the enemy with a band of Huns (Claud. *In Ruf.* 1. 314–22). In the second version, written a few years later when some further liberties could presumably be taken with the details, Stilicho devastated the Bastarnae in a terrible massacre and slaughtered hordes of infantry and cavalry, a whole nation ("inferis gens tota datur"), on the tomb of his friend Promotus.¹⁰ Then, presumably after the massacre, Stilicho had a still vast barbarian army penned up in a narrow valley, but through the

trickery of Rufinus he was obliged to delay, then raise the siege and make a treaty with the enemy. The resemblance of this account to several other episodes in Stilicho's career is striking; this is not the only time he is portrayed just on the verge of annihilating a barbarian army completely at his mercy, when he is foiled by treachery or some circumstance outside his control. In this particular episode it is difficult to imagine how the civilian Rufinus managed to trick the hardened soldier Theodosius into making a bad military decision and then get off scot-free afterward. Claudian does not provide any clues. Furthermore, the very repetition of this motif—Stilicho foiled on the verge of a great victory—makes it suspect.

The pattern appears again in 395. In the spring of that year, Stilicho, while still commanding the combined eastern and western armies, crossed the Julian Alps to perform some policing operations in Pannonia and Dalmatia. Claudian reports that the barbarians, in terror at his approach, ceased their raids.¹¹ Stilicho then proceeded into Macedonia where Alaric, the Visigothic chieftain, had already advanced, and followed him from there into Thessaly where, somewhere in the valley of the Peneus, Alaric threw up a hasty fortification and was surrounded by Stilicho.

As for the details of what happened next, the only source is Claudian (*In Ruf.* 2. 130 ff.). According to him, Rufinus, who is already in league with Alaric, panics at the success gained by Stilicho and determines that he must be stopped at all costs. He persuades Arcadius to send a message to Stilicho summoning him to return the eastern troops in his combined army to Constantinople, and to withdraw at once from eastern territory where he has no authority.

The message arrives just as Stilicho is haranguing his eager host, prior to the battle in which Alaric will be utterly crushed. Stilicho is thunderstruck, overcome by anger and grief. Like Aeneas or some other of the great heroes, he hesitates for a moment, torn between his desire to deliver Illyrium from the

enemy and the necessity of obeying instructions. Loyalty wins. Stilicho silences his troops, who are wild with disappointment, dispatches the eastern army to Constantinople, and returns with the rest to Italy. If battle had been joined at that moment, Claudian says, Greece would have been saved from devastation and the calamities of the empire brought to an end.

This version of events has generally been accepted at face value by scholars. The only other version available from antiquity is built around the allegation, preposterous but predictable in the light of the anti-barbarian opposition to Stilicho, that it was not Rufinus but Stilicho who was planning at every turn to betray the empire to the barbarians. In the absence of any more coherent and credible historical accounts, the widespread tendency has been to regard Claudian as a historical writer, and to overlook his propagandistic purposes; the dangers inherent in this approach cannot be overemphasized.¹² If the version of these events given by Claudian seems very peculiar, its credibility is stretched to the utmost when it appears as just one step in the sequence of terrible strokes of bad luck that befell Stilicho, repeatedly robbed of certain victory by some circumstance beyond his control.

Claudian appears to be protesting too much, which is a characteristic of the propagandist or the apologist. The relevant lines of *In Ruf.* 2 are invective against Rufinus, with a favorable picture of Stilicho thrown in for contrast. Claudian gives considerable prominence to the grandiose description of Stilicho's combined army as it set off from Italy in the spring, led by the most powerful military figure in the entire empire. One feature in this description that receives a surprising amount of emphasis is the loyalty and discipline of the troops. Surely it goes without saying that a great general's troops are disciplined and loyal to their leader. Their magnificent or fearsome appearance, their valor and eagerness for the fray: these are elements in the traditional epic description of a host, but Claudian's harping on their discipline and loyalty arouses suspicion.

As the army sets off:

Mens eadem cunctis animique recentia ponunt
vulnera; non odit victus victorve superbit.
et quamvis praesens tumor et civilia nuper
classica bellatrixque etiamnunc ira caleret,
in ducis eximii conspiravere favorem.
(*In Ruf.* 2. 115 ff.)¹³

Later, when the message comes from Arcadius, and Stilicho tells his joint army that they must split up and withdraw, “omnes una fremuere manipuli,” and a couple of lines further:

Secernique negant ereptaque proelia poscunt,
insignemque ducem populus defendit uterque
et sibi quisque trahit. magno certatur amore,
alternamque fidem non inlaudata lacessit
seditio talique simul clamore queruntur.
(*Ibid.* 2. 220 ff.)

The word “seditio” manages to creep in, even though Claudian assures that it is “non inlaudata”; this is quite a startling turn of phrase for the poet to use if the word “seditio” was not already in the back of his mind. In any case, the soldiers protest that they will follow Stilicho to the ends of the earth, so long as they are not deprived of the battle for which they long, or separated into two groups:

. . . quid consanguineas acies, quid dividis olim
concordes aquilas? non dissociabile corpus
coniunctumque sumus (*Ibid.* 2. 237 ff.)

Seeing that he is adamant, they groan and sigh and bedew their helmets with tears. So strong a corporate bond is surprising

among troops who, only the previous year, had fought against one another in the bloody battle of the Frigidus. Following that battle, Theodosius had granted a general amnesty to the defeated soldiers of Eugenius. This was the general practice of the time, troops being then a very valuable commodity,¹⁴ but precisely because it was the general practice and was therefore expected, it probably contributed little toward the solidarity of the defeated western soldiers with Stilicho and his eastern troops.

Besides the loyalty and discipline of the soldiers, their eagerness to join battle against Alaric and his Visigoths is also strongly emphasized in the later part of this episode, but whatever the reason may have been, the battle did not take place, Stilicho set off for home without a victory, and Alaric remained a menace. Had Stilicho's military career otherwise been a series of scintillating victories, Claudian's account of this episode might be taken at face value, but since this one is so dismally like several other episodes, doubts about the discipline and loyalty of the troops and their eagerness for battle hint at a more plausible explanation for the fiasco.

Zosimus and John of Antioch both telescope this expedition and that of 397 into a single account, and the explanation they give of its failure is that Stilicho lost control of his troops.¹⁵ It is most unlikely that Rufinus would have thrown away the opportunity of getting rid of Alaric, who had recently been besieging Constantinople and was quite likely to return there. Rufinus may well have feared that Stilicho himself would march on Constantinople, but Stilicho was just as likely to do this before as after facing Alaric. The most improbable event of all is that Stilicho would have split up his army and marched off as a blind act of obedience to Arcadius, if, as Claudian would have us believe, he was just about to lead a loyal, disciplined, and eager army to a resounding victory. This was one of the dreams of his career; it would have established his prestige infinitely more than a mechanical act of obedience, which could easily have

been performed after the victory. In any case, Stilicho did not have compunctions about manipulating Honorius while ostensibly following his orders, and it was obvious that Rufinus felt the same about Arcadius. It is unlikely that Stilicho would have refrained from manipulating Arcadius on his own account, which a resounding victory with the combined army would have enabled him to do. The murder of Rufinus shortly thereafter was a poor compensation for the initiative lost to Stilicho. Whether he actually instigated the murder or merely claimed credit for it afterward,¹⁶ he was in no position, and apparently made no effort, to profit by it, for he had just marched off in the opposite direction and was probably in or near Italy when it took place. At the same time, there was no need for Stilicho to pretend that the decisions foisted on Arcadius by Rufinus were Arcadius's own wishes, when he otherwise made it so clear that he distinguished sharply between Arcadius and his ministers. He endlessly abused the eastern government, but never Arcadius. In general, Stilicho's obsequiousness toward Arcadius seems to derive either from his impotence to interfere directly in Constantinople or from a suspicion that the wishes of Arcadius's ministers might be shared by Arcadius himself. In any case, Stilicho's inability to interfere in Constantinople was not a simple military one.

There is strong reason for believing that it was specifically the eastern portion of his joint army, into which Theodosius had recently recruited large numbers of barbarians, that was giving Stilicho trouble in 395, and that he was glad to be rid of them.¹⁷ This argument receives some support from the version of events given by Zosimus, who does not link the return of eastern troops with Stilicho's failure in Greece, but mentions in two separate places that troops were dispatched directly from Italy and on the initiative of Stilicho. First, he states that after Theodosius's death, Stilicho kept for himself the best troops and sent the inferior ones to the East (5.4.2). A little later, he describes

the dispatch of some cohorts from Italy to Constantinople as part of Stilicho's plot to murder Rufinus (5.7.3 f.). In any event, whether it is true that Arcadius demanded the return of the troops, or Stilicho sent them on his own initiative, or both versions together, for there may be some validity in both of them, Stilicho lost half his army without having achieved his goal.

Now he was left with the western troops alone, the remnant of the army that Theodosius had defeated at the Frigidus, and his first concern was recruiting more troops. For this purpose, he made an expedition along the Rhine in 396. According to the accounts of Claudian, everything between the Ocean and the Danube trembled, and the fierce tribes of Germany prostrated themselves in fear at his very approach. He achieved as much in as many days as Drusus or Trajan had done in years during this extremely short expedition: Stilicho set out with the new moon and returned before it was full, outstripping the Rhine itself in speed.¹⁸ From this account, two facts of interest can be extracted: first, Stilicho, unlike Drusus and Trajan, achieved his results without actually engaging in any military action; and second, Germans enrolled themselves in the Roman army. Stilicho's concern with maintaining an adequate army is further demonstrated by a law of 23 April 396 prosecuting deserters and those who harbored them.¹⁹

By 397 Stilicho felt strong enough to make another expedition to Greece to face Alaric. The fact that he now led an army into eastern territory entirely on his own initiative and with no invitation from the eastern government indicates how ready he was to take unilateral action when he felt militarily strong enough to do so.²⁰ In Claudian's account (*IV Cons. Hon.* 459–83), Stilicho catches up with Alaric in Arcadia, forms a blockade around him on a hill, and diverts the water supply. From the vague references to a bloodbath, there probably was some fighting, but without ever reporting the outcome, Claudian changes the subject.²¹ Whether Stilicho's aim had been to inflict defeat

upon Alaric, or to induce him to resume the status of Roman commander, which he had held briefly under Theodosius, or perhaps both, he succeeded in neither. Alaric's ravaging of Greece continued undiminished.

The only available account of the actual outcome of the campaign is that of Zosimus, in view of Claudian's sudden lapse into silence:

καὶ ῥᾶστα διέφθειρεν ἄν αὐτοὺς σπάνει τῶν ἐπιτηδείων,
εἰ μὴ τρυφῇ καὶ μίμοις γελοίων ἤκιστα τε αἰσχυνομέναις
γυναιξίν ἐκδοὺς ἑαυτὸν ἀφῆκε τοὺς στρατιώτας, ὅσα
καταλελοίπασιν οἱ βάρβαροι, ἀρπάζειν, τοῦ τε δοῦναι
τοῖς πολεμίοις εὐρυχωρίαν ἀναχωρήσασιν τῆς
Πελοποννήσου μετὰ πάσης τῆς λείας εἰς τὴν Ἑπειρόν
διαβῆναι καὶ τὰς ἐν ταύτῃ λήσασθαι πόλεις. ὅπερ
αὐτοὺς ὁ Στελίκων πεποιηκότας ἰδὼν ἄπρακτος ἐπὶ
τὴν Ἰταλίαν ἀπέπλευσε. . . .²²

The prudish, personal aspect of this attack can be disregarded; Zosimus is here epitomizing Eunapius, who is hostile to Stilicho. It is interesting, however, that instead of making the usual charge of treachery against Stilicho, Zosimus gives this picture of his army looting in Greece.²³ Perhaps Stilicho had no more success in disciplining the Germans, whom he had recruited the previous year, than he had had in 395 with the eastern forces that Theodosius had packed with barbarians. The transfer, in so short a space of time, of raw barbarian recruits from the east bank of the Rhine to the Peloponnese might have taxed the capacities of the most rigid disciplinarian. That the Goths kept their Greek spoils, as Zosimus says, is even confirmed by Claudian himself who, at a later date, describes them as still in possession of booty and slaves from the Peloponnese.²⁴ In view of the charge of looting made by Zosimus against Stilicho's army, it is interesting to glance at a passage in *Cons. Stil.*:

Nil inter geminas acies, ceu libera frenis,
 ausa manus. . . .
 In quo tam vario vocum generumque tumultu
 tanta quies iurisque metus servator honesti
 te moderante fuit, nullis ut vinea furtis
 vel seges erepta fraudaret messe colonum,
 ut nihil aut saevum rabies aut turpe libido
 suaderet. . . . (l. 151 ff.)

The reference to the two armies points to 395, but in this poem, written in 400, Claudian is recapitulating Stilicho's exploits prior to that date, and because no other reference is made to his activities in southern Greece except those in this passage of about forty lines, it can probably be assumed that this refers loosely to both the 395 and 397 expeditions.

"Things which Claudian first mentions in his later poems are usually things he did not dare to say earlier: either because they were too flagrantly false—or else, as here, too painfully true."²⁵ With these words A. Cameron refers to an admission made by Claudian after Alaric's defeat at Pollentia that the Visigothic chieftain had once tried to corrupt the Roman army with gold: "nostri quondam qui militis auro / adgressus tempore fidem" (*Bell. Goth.* 87–88). That this should have been attempted, and perhaps with success, is not so very preposterous; Cameron cites similar instances from this period. The most obvious time for it to have happened was when Alaric had the spoils of Greece at his disposal and Stilicho was in command of an army that included many recently recruited barbarian mercenaries. In view of his repeated attempts to win over Alaric and his followers as federates, the ancient charges of treachery made against Stilicho are not surprising. During the episode in Arcadia, there was considerable coming and going between the opposing sides, with Stilicho trying to win over Alaric, and Alaric trying to buy off Stilicho's troops. It is by no means unthinkable

that in this contest Stilicho came off second best; that he did not win a military victory is clear, Claudian's references to a massacre notwithstanding. The other interpretations of the events of 397 tentatively proposed by modern scholars—that Stilicho made a pact with Alaric, that he withdrew suddenly because of the threat of Gildo's revolt, that there was some sort of intervention from the eastern government—smack of special pleading.²⁶ Even if any or all of these were factors, their principal defect surely is that, in view of Alaric's continued hostilities, they do not constitute adequate explanations of why Stilicho, after taking the trouble to bring an army to Greece and run Alaric to earth, allowed himself to be foiled once again.

Stilicho's next military problem was the revolt of Gildo, who had been *comes et magister utriusque militiae per Africam* since 385,²⁷ and as such, even under Theodosius, had enjoyed virtual independence. In 397, when Stilicho's troops were occupied in Greece, Gildo broke completely with the West and formed a liaison with the eastern government. This move must have been particularly embarrassing to Stilicho, for Gildo must have been able to make it under some considerable semblance of legality; Gildo acted with the encouragement of Eutropius, who, since the murder of Rufinus, was master of the East and manager of the affairs of Arcadius, and who had just had Stilicho declared a public enemy at Constantinople. From his successful handling of this affair Stilicho greatly increased his prestige and strengthened his position, for it is clear that he averted a serious threat to Italy by his prompt action to ensure an adequate grain supply. He avoided personal military involvement, however, by contenting himself with the preparations on the Italian side, and then turning the leadership of the campaign over to Gildo's brother Mascezel, who brought it to a swift and victorious conclusion and returned to Italy in triumph.²⁸ Stilicho had every reason to exercise caution in this struggle. By eliminating himself from the battle, he played down its wider

political implications and made it look like some kind of local or family struggle.²⁹ Stilicho chose precisely this juncture, with its possibilities of confrontation with the East, to revive the fiction that it was a senatorial prerogative to declare Gildo a public enemy and make war on him; the Roman senate did not fail to exercise this prerogative in the way expected of it. This move offered Stilicho a further advantage. Should Mascezel's campaign meet with setbacks, he could shift to the senate the opprobrium for a war that might be protracted and might entail a cutting of the grain supply and subsequent hardship and rioting.³⁰ Finally, quite apart from these other considerations, Stilicho was doubtless unenthusiastic about abandoning Honorius to the counsels of others while he himself crossed the Mediterranean to face Gildo on his home ground in what could easily have become a prolonged campaign.

The changing official version of the event can be traced in the verses of Claudian. In *Bell. Gild.* the achievement of Mascezel is belittled, and his victory is not even described. In *Cons. Stil.* 1, written a few years later, the affair is a great triumph for Stilicho. Claudian explains that Stilicho did not wish to place all his eggs in one basket by setting off for Africa in person; had the first army met with a setback, the great general was ready to follow up himself with a second expedition.³¹ As for Mascezel, he met with an unfortunate accident. Zosimus (5. 11) writes that he was pushed into a river by Stilicho's guards and subsequently drowned. Granted, Zosimus is a hostile witness, but as far as Claudian is concerned, Mascezel is not worth mentioning. In the official version there was room for only one victor over Gildo, and Stilicho still needed a real victory to his credit.

The chroniclers say, though without offering any detail, that in 400 the Goths invaded Italy under the leadership of Alaric and Radagaisus.³² This reference to Radagaisus may tie in with an extended but extremely vague description by Claudian in *Bell. Goth.* of a winter campaign by Stilicho in Rhaetia.³³ Whatever it was that

Stilicho did, it seems to have had the effect of quelling disorder in that area, and of providing Stilicho with fresh recruits. Claudian recounts:

. . . nascentia bella repressit
et bello quaesivit opes legitque precantes
auxilio mensus numerum, qui congruus esset
nec gravis Italiae formidandusve regenti.
(*Bell Goth.* 400 ff.)

These last two lines comprise a curious and apparently gratuitous remark, seemingly tacked on, and not à propos of any other explicit statements from Claudian. He seems anxious to reassure his audience that Stilicho now wants to avoid getting into trouble with too many hastily recruited barbarians.

When Alaric led the Visigoths into Italy in late 401,³⁴ Stilicho was forced to do what he had not done before—face them in open battle. Whether the Roman army was in better shape now than earlier in Stilicho's career is open to question; Alaric, on the other hand, had certainly made use of his now lengthy sojourn within Roman territory to absorb some of the technical skill that had formerly given Roman armies the advantage over barbarian hordes. Claudian himself admits this when he puts the following words into Alaric's mouth:

. . . Gens robore nostra
tum quoque pollebat, nullis cum fideret armis.
at nunc Illyrici postquam mihi tradita iura
meque suum fecere ducem: tot tela, tot enses,
tot galeas multo Thracum sudore paravi
inque meos usus vectigal vertere ferri
oppida legitimo iussu Romana coegi.
(*Bell. Goth.* 533 ff.)

The Visigoths, in effect, were a much more formidable foe now than they would have been some years earlier, and though Stilicho succeeded in halting their invasion of Italy in 402 or 403,³⁵ he only postponed the final catastrophe, and left Alaric free in the meantime to pillage other Roman territory.

For the events of this invasion, Claudian is just as sparing as ever of concrete details concerning Stilicho's role, and just as prone to come up with different versions at different times. The first battle, fought at Pollentia in 402,³⁶ is mentioned extensively in *Bell. Goth.* and *VI Cons. Hon.* It apparently involved a great slaughter on both sides and no decisive outcome. Claudian, of course, represents Alaric as deeply humbled, but Gothic writers of the sixth century claimed the battle as a Gothic victory.³⁷ In the midst of all the incidental details, Claudian gives one short description of actual fighting; he describes the death of the chieftain of a group of Alan auxiliary cavalry who had been under some suspicion of treachery, and the subsequent disarray of his troops who were rallied only by Stilicho's arrival with a legion (*Bell. Goth.* 580–97). This is the only account of fighting that Claudian gives, though descriptions of the battles of great commanders are certainly not alien to the poetic tradition. Although it shows Stilicho saving the day, it also reveals that the battle was almost lost (“totaque praeciso nutassent agmina cornu”) through the unreliability of Stilicho's barbarian troops.

Orosius, just after mentioning the battle of Pollentia and before going on to talk about the invasion of Radagaisus, makes a remark that seems to reflect the uncontrollable behavior of the barbarian allies at this time: “Taceo de ipsorum inter se barbarorum crebris dilacerationibus, cum se invicem Gothorum cunei duo, deinde Alani atque Huni variis caedibus populabantur” (7. 37. 3). He also gives another curious bit of information: “Taceo de infelicibus illis apud Pollentiam gestis, cum barbaro et pagano duci, hoc est Sauli, belli summa commissa est” (7. 37. 2). It is clear that at Polentia and Verona, and again in the campaign

against Radagaisus, Stilicho was pursuing a deliberate policy of letting the *foederati* bear the brunt of the fighting; this was a long-standing Roman strategy that was followed by the generalissimos of the fifth century. It is possible, however, that Stilicho was attempting to do what he had done in the Gildonic War, namely let somebody else take charge of the fighting while he himself did the organizing from a distance.³⁸ It is quite possible that at Pollentia he intended to stay clear of the fighting altogether, and only joined in when things began to go badly.

Claudian's main preoccupation in writing about Pollentia was to explain away the fact that Alaric escaped with a considerable force intact.³⁹ In *Bell. Goth.*, written within a few months after Pollentia, Claudian suggests that with the Goths on Italian soil and Rome itself in jeopardy, a way should be kept open at all times for the invaders to leave Italy; the safety of Rome was too important for Stilicho to risk the hazards of a battle to the finish. After the victory at Verona, Claudian was able to modify this version by stating that Stilicho's aim had been to lure Alaric across the Po and attack him at a point more distant from Rome.

The second battle was fought at Verona; that Stilicho did better here, and that Alaric was forced to retreat in considerable disarray, can be deduced from Claudian, though once again his cryptic description of the battle sheds little light on the actual course of the fighting.⁴⁰ It would seem that in a fierce fight before the walls of Verona, Alaric was almost captured but succeeded in making off. Claudian mentions how cleverly Stilicho pitted his barbarian troops against those of Alaric, letting barbarian slaughter barbarian to Roman advantage; evidently this is what his audience wanted to hear. The failure to capture Alaric was caused by the undue haste of the rash Alans:

Ipsam te caperet letoque, Alarice, dedisset,
ni calor incauti male festinatus Alani
dispositum turbasset opus.
(VI Cons. Hon. 223 ff.)

Once more Stilicho was robbed of definitive victory by unreliable troops. After his retreat Alaric attempted to break away across the Alps with the idea of falling upon Rhaetia or Gaul, but Stilicho blockaded him on a hill. Hunger and pestilence were now playing havoc with Alaric's followers, and they were deserting in large numbers. Nevertheless, they escaped, far from crushed, and returned to pillage Illyricum for a couple of years.⁴¹

Ironically, Claudian's career ended before he was able to celebrate Stilicho's one and only decisive victory, the great massacre of Faesulae, for which, indeed, no propagandist was needed.⁴² Toward the end of 405, the horde of Radagaisus, though doubtless inferior to the troops of Alaric in terms of organization and equipment, suddenly swept down upon Italy in formidable numbers.⁴³ The regular forces that Stilicho had at his disposal were evidently quite meager,⁴⁴ and he again hurriedly summoned barbarian auxiliaries—Huns, Goths, and Alans. Two groups of the invaders, who had separated from Radagaisus's sharp thrust toward Rome, were compelled or persuaded by Stilicho to leave Italy; he was later accused of negotiating with them, and this is probably the method he used. The main group had reached Florence and was besieging the city when Stilicho arrived and compelled them to abandon the siege and withdraw to the hill of Faesulae. Here Stilicho employed his favorite tactic of encircling the enemy and cutting off their supply of food and water. In this case it was highly successful; there is no evidence of Stilicho's having had difficulties with his troops, and a great massacre of the invaders followed. Augustine tells us that not a single Roman was wounded (*De Civ. Dei* 5. 23); Stilicho again let his barbarian troops bear the brunt of the danger.⁴⁵ The sources indicate that after this victory, Stilicho was fêted as a hero. The captive Radagaisus was exhibited in Rome before being executed and monuments, including a triumphal arch, were erected in honor of Stilicho and his army.⁴⁶ Stilicho must have made the most of this short-lived moment of jubilation throughout Italy.

His only decisive victory was also the last military operation of his life. His neglect in dealing with a massive Germanic invasion of Gaul at the end of 406 was followed by the usurpation of one Constantine, a soldier who started from Britain and, by the end of 407, had won control of Gaul. Alaric in his turn was threatening another invasion of Italy and demanding a payment of 4,000 pounds of gold. In the midst of this crisis came news of the death of Arcadius, and at this point Stilicho, instead of dealing personally with the military situation in the West, decided to travel to Constantinople to further his ambitions there.

The climax finally came with a revolt of the Roman troops stationed at Ticinum, the result of an accumulation of grudges that went all the way back to the Frigidus, or further.⁴⁷ Word of the revolt reached Stilicho at Bononia. Although he was still at the head of a band of barbarian troops, he did not attempt to defend himself or march against the mutineers. In the wholesale alienation of the Roman soldiers he recognized the reopening of old wounds and the utter collapse of his most fundamental guiding policies. He was not interested in making a mere personal resistance or attempting any sort of coup, although his barbarian followers urged him to do so. Instead he determined to proceed to Ravenna and confer with Honorius. Learning that Honorius had ordered his arrest and detention, he took refuge in a church. The next day, guards sent by Honorius tricked him into revealing himself, and then informed him that they had orders for his immediate execution. Stilicho instructed his men to offer no resistance, and went quietly to his death.

4 | *The Emperor's Generalissimo*

Stilicho was the only generalissimo to have attained his position for some reason other than his being the most able general. He knew how to twist to his own advantage either unpromising situations or other people's victories. He gave regular reminders to the western public of his special relationship with Honorius and the confidence Theodosius had placed in him. Military rank and connection with the imperial family made a strong combination that served Stilicho well for a number of years and might have been expected to serve him longer.

Perhaps his position might have been saved at the end had he better estimated the strength and passion of the anti-German opposition and shown more efforts to placate it; or had he not let Gaul fall to the barbarians in 407 while he was pre-occupied with furthering his ambitions in the East; or had he simply not lost the ear of Honorius at the very end. How could a man who had hitherto organized his career so carefully suddenly lose his grip in this way? Surely he must have been aware of the extent of anti-German sentiment and the growing alienation of the Roman elements in his army. Surely he must have

been aware of the gravity of the situation in Gaul and the reasons for the widespread support of the usurper Constantine. Surely he realized the perils that awaited him if he threw away his trump card and let Honorius be influenced by those who were engineering his own downfall. And yet in 408 he invited the hated Alaric to lead a Roman army against Constantine, who must have had the support of all those formerly in support of Eugenius and of many more besides. Meanwhile he himself prepared to go to the East, where he was clearly neither needed nor wanted.

If the situation is examined solely from the standpoint of Stilicho's self-interest, he seems bent on self-destruction.¹ His actions are simply not those of a man whose guiding motive is pure self-aggrandizement. His desire to extend his influence to the East at the very moment when his position in the West is tottering does not smack of mere megalomania. There is an idealistic single-mindedness in his insistence on personal moral rights in both portions of the empire. It is in this light that one must look at his apparently incongruous behavior in the final phase of his career, his disregard of the sentiments of the Roman troops, his abandonment of Gaul to be fought over by Constantine, Alaric, and the fresh German hordes, and his deliverance of Honorius to his own personal enemies, apparently in the naive belief that his moral claims were so strong that the young emperor could never turn against him. The whole impression is borne out by his docile acceptance of death once it was clear that he had lost the favor of Honorius and the inevitable revolt had broken out. What were the motives that guided Stilicho throughout his career and brought him, in the end, to throw away everything?

Zosimus describes the situation after the battle of the Frigidus in these words:

Τῶν δὲ πραγμάτων ὧδε τῷ βασιλεῖ Θεοδοσίῳ
προχωρησάντων, ἐπιδημήσας τῇ Ῥώμῃ τὸν υἱὸν Ὀν-
ώριον ἀναδείκνυσι βασιλέα, Στελίχωνα στρατηγόν

τε ἀποφήνας ἅμα τῶν αὐτόθι ταγμάτων καὶ
ἐπίτροπον καταλιπὼν τῷ παιδί. (4. 59. 1)

Eunapius, one of Zosimus's presumed sources,² says that the sons of Theodosius were rulers in name only (frg. 62); in reality Rufinus had full control over eastern affairs and Stilicho over western. Olympiodorus, Zosimus's other source, does not confine Stilicho's guardianship to Honorius; in frg. 2 he tells what great power Stilicho attained:

καταστὰς ἐπίτροπος τῶν παίδων Ἀρκαδίου καὶ
Ὀνωρίου ὑπ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτῶν Θεοδοσίου
τοῦ μεγάλου.

In the matter of legality and constitutionality, it is most important to distinguish between the provisions of Roman civil law concerning *tutela*, and established practice concerning the succession of Augusti and the collegial nature of this dignity.³ There was no minimum age for an Augustus; a new member could be admitted to the college of Augusti even as a child, and this in fact was done in the cases of Arcadius and Honorius. Arcadius was given the purple in 383 at the age of eleven, Honorius ten years later when eight years old.⁴ Thus, from this point in 393 until the death of Theodosius in 395, the empire was officially being ruled by a college of three Augusti: Theodosius, Arcadius, and Honorius,⁵ whose ages and mutual family relationship certainly affected in practice the sharing of responsibilities and the running of the state, though these considerations were in theory irrelevant. Laws were made in the name of the college as a whole, the Augusti being supposed to act unanimously, in the literal sense of the word.

Thus, in their capacity as his political colleagues, Arcadius and Honorius were at no time subject to the guardianship of their father once they had been accepted into the college. His

private rights over them as their father had nothing to do with state matters. Similarly, though a guardian could be appointed to manage the private affairs of a child under the age of fourteen, he had no power over that child's public actions should the child be an Augustus; the concept of a "regent" did not exist for the Romans. This must be borne carefully in mind in considering the situation at the death of Theodosius. Honorius, at the age of ten, could still be given a private guardian, though Arcadius at eighteen could not, but in neither case could this affect their status as Augusti. The idea of "succession to the throne" is not applicable (though admittedly the empire was tending in this direction, and many Romans, especially in the army, had for several centuries liked to think in these dynastic terms).⁶ Nor is it true that Theodosius "bequeathed" the empire to his sons; he had already divided his power with them when they were made Augusti, and there was no higher rank to which they could now rise. In this collegial system no official or legal provision was ever made as to what should be done if one or even all of the reigning Augusti were incapable of responsible action because of mental weakness, extreme youth, or any other cause.

As the great German scholar, Theodor Mommsen, shrewdly summed it up, the question of who wielded the power that nominally belonged to the Augustus or Augusti was not a legal question but a power question.⁷ This power might be blatantly military, as it was to become later in the West, or it might be political and bureaucratic, as it was in the case of Arcadius's successive ministers. In the case of Stilicho it rested on a combination of military power and a special moral prestige deriving from his relationship by marriage with the imperial family and from the wishes of Theodosius as expressed at the close of his life. Stilicho did not, however, occupy any special political position (other than the occasional honorific consulate); his official standing was purely the military one that was examined in Chapter 2. The only way in which he might have enjoyed higher legal if

not de facto political power would have been as a member of the college of Augusti, a promotion to which he had good reasons for not aspiring.

In the two Greek quotations above, both Olympiodorus and Zosimus use the legalistic term “ἐπίτροπος,” and this has been echoed in the extensive use by modern writers of words like “tutor,” “guardian,” or even “regent.” These terms, like the “ἐπίτροπος” of the two ancient authors, must be understood in the loose sense of a moral or family obligation. Claudian returns repeatedly to Stilicho’s moral right, based on the alleged last wishes of Theodosius, to guide the destinies of Arcadius and Honorius, but it is most significant that he carefully avoids legalistic terms. Stilicho’s official attitude, as reflected in the poems of Claudian, was that his guardianship of the young emperors rested at all times on their voluntary acceptance of him. It was treated as a matter of pious duty, of following the last wishes of their father; Stilicho’s strongest claim lay in the word “parens.” Because of the moral nature of the claim, Stilicho could go on pressing it even when the objects of his guardianship were in their twenties, and it is in the same spirit that, after the death of Arcadius, he aspired to march to Constantinople and become the guardian of the young Theodosius II. Likewise, Stilicho never marched on Constantinople in the lifetime of Arcadius because he was never invited by that emperor to do so.

In connection with Theodosius’s dying wishes, the same caution is necessary in using the words “will” and “testament.” He could make a private will, but concerning the imperial succession there was nothing further that he could do, and this in fact is exactly what St. Ambrose says in his funeral oration for Theodosius, where he states that the dying emperor “non communi iure testatus est: de filiis enim nihil habebat novum quod conderet, quibus totum dederat, nisi ut eos praesenti commendaret parenti.” The purely moral nature of this *commendatio* is well brought out in Ambrose’s remark: “Quid dignius quam ut testamentum imperatoris lex sit?”⁸

The circumstances surrounding Theodosius's final settlement have had some very searching examination by A. Cameron in a most important recent article.⁹ Starting from Zosimus (4. 59. 1), he argues that in 394, after his victory at the Frigidus, Theodosius visited Rome and on that occasion appointed Stilicho *magister militum per occidentem*, and made him guardian or regent of Honorius. That Zosimus's "ἐπίτροπος" is to be taken very loosely is even more obvious in this interpretation of events, for Theodosius is not at this point on his deathbed; he is merely about to return to the East. The one item clearly to be rejected in this Zosimus passage is that on this occasion Theodosius also elevated Honorius as emperor in Rome, for he had already done that in Constantinople in 393, and Honorius was not with him in Rome in 394. Cameron admits that some scholars do not agree with this visit of Theodosius to Rome in 394, and though he argues at some length in its favor, nevertheless, rejection of this point will not affect the rest of his thesis, for Zosimus could have mistakenly located in Rome something that actually happened at Milan. Cameron shows the importance of distinguishing between this 394 settlement, by which Theodosius arranged matters in the West prior to his intended return to the East where some urgent problems demanded his attention, and the "deathbed settlement" of early 395. The neatest hypothesis is that death overtook Theodosius at Milan while he was on his way back to the East. Other scholars take Zosimus 4. 59. 1 to be "a garbled and erroneous allusion to the 'deathbed settlement'."¹⁰

Stilicho's widest claims rested upon this "deathbed settlement," for on this occasion Theodosius was supposed to have entrusted to him the care of both sons and of the entire empire. Indeed, to judge by the reference in Ambrose's funeral oration, quoted above, the entire deathbed settlement consisted of just this, for Theodosius had already settled everything else. The brevity of Ambrose's allusion is striking. Perhaps he did not

realize at the time (the speech was made only forty days after Theodosius's death) the significance that this commendatio was to assume in Stilicho's claims and plans for the future, and in the whole context of East-West relations for the next thirteen years. If he did, being aware also of the peculiar circumstances in which the commendatio was alleged to have been made, Ambrose chose to steer carefully round the subject and let Stilicho publish his own official version of the event in due course.¹¹ This official version was incorporated into Claudian's *III Cons. Hon.* The most significant feature of it is that there were no witnesses to the commendatio; no one but Stilicho was present when Theodosius made it.¹² Claudian introduces the speech of Theodosius with these two lines:

ut ventum ad sedes, cunctos discedere tectis
dux iubet et generum compellat talibus ultro.
(*III Cons. Hon.* 142 f.)

It is most peculiar that Theodosius should have dismissed all witnesses prior to making such a momentous speech, and one can only assume, with Cameron, that Claudian is making a virtue of necessity; since it was common knowledge that there were no witnesses, he makes it look as if Theodosius had chosen, for some good but unspecified reason, to dismiss them. In effect, the commendatio of the two sons rested in the last resort on Stilicho's word, and precisely this fact is reflected in Zosimus's first reference to Stilicho's eastern claims (5. 4. 3):

ἔλεγε γὰρ ἐπιτετράφθαι παρὰ Θεοδοσίου τελευτᾶν
μέλλοντος τὰ κατ' ἄμφω τοὺς βασιλέας ἔχειν ἐν
πάσῃ φροντίδι.

"He said"—but there was no one else to substantiate his claim. Other authorities have no further information to add; they

either repeat Stilicho's version or disregard it depending on whether they believed Stilicho or not.¹³

All of the poems of Claudian in which the eastern claims of Stilicho are expressed postdate the murder of Rufinus.¹⁴ With regard to the management of Arcadius's portion of the empire, Rufinus could have claimed to have received a similar commission from Theodosius, and this claim did not rest solely upon his own account of a private interview. Furthermore, even after the death of Rufinus, Arcadius and his government at no time took seriously the eastern claims of Stilicho. The extreme view is that Stilicho made the whole thing up as a calculated attempt to further his own career, and published it after he had ordered the murder of Rufinus.

This is very unlikely, in view of Stilicho's scrupulous loyalty to Theodosius and his sons, and the persistence, the obsessiveness, even, with which he pressed this particular claim. The most probable though admittedly not wholly satisfactory conclusion is that he magnified out of all proportion a very vague and general remark of the dying Theodosius. The vagueness of the mandate may, perhaps, be gauged from the apparent later restriction of Stilicho's claims to a guardianship of Honorius alone, as hinted in Claudian's *VI Cons. Hon.* of 403-4:

. . . illumque diem sub corde referres,
quo tibi confusa dubiis formidine rebus
infantem genitor moriens commisit alendum.
(11.581 ff.)

These lines, a unique case of Claudian relating Stilicho's claim to one son only, might prompt curiosity about which version Stilicho himself believed, and why he circulated different versions at different times.¹⁵ Such a restriction of Stilicho's claims at this stage, however, when his eastern ambitions looked completely hopeless, is not surprising. He was now moving in a

direction that would lead him, a couple of years later, to conceive of outright hostilities against the East; it need not be interpreted so as to cast doubt on Stilicho's sincerity in his original version of Theodosius's mandate. Had Theodosius really intended, however, that Stilicho exercise in the East an authority comparable to that which he held in the West, he would hardly have communicated this wish in secret. More importantly, in view of the purely moral and non-legal character that such a guardianship of Arcadius would have had, Theodosius would surely have bolstered it by conferring on Stilicho a degree of military power in the East comparable to what he held in the West, and this, at least, would have been legally binding. After Stilicho had sent back the eastern troops under Gainas in 395, however, he never laid claim to a specific military position in the East — this would have required more than his word on something that had passed in private between him and Theodosius. Stilicho, in pressing his eastern claims, was reluctant to overstep the bounds of what was legally permissible, for he waited in vain during the rest of Arcadius's lifetime to be invited to Constantinople. So anxious, however, to obtain what he sincerely believed was his due, he was prepared to jeopardize the unity of the empire to which he attached great importance. He continually insisted that his only quarrel was with those ministers of Arcadius who wished to frustrate the wishes of Theodosius, but not at all with Arcadius himself. Relations between the two capitals deteriorated as his steady propaganda, and other actions designed to further his claim, kept East-West relations in a state of constant flux.

Stilicho's lifelong desire was to preserve the unity of the empire, both politically and militarily; (admittedly, in this scheme of things, he himself was to play a role of vast importance as "protector" of both emperors and supreme military commander for the entire empire). It is easy to lose sight of this basic principle, for his repeatedly strained relations with the eastern government (with whom Arcadius himself seems to

have been in full accord) and his ambiguous relations with Alaric, culminating in the plan for a joint expedition to capture eastern Illyricum,¹⁶ may lead one to suppose that he was primarily interested in a policy of aggrandizement for the West.

The status of Illyricum during this period and Stilicho's policies in regard to it have been much debated by scholars. Mommsen's view was that one of Stilicho's guiding principles, from 395 on, was to win control of the entire prefecture of Illyricum, and to this end, under the agreement reached by Stilicho and Alaric after Pollentia, the latter was made a commander of the western army and plans were laid for taking eastern Illyricum.¹⁷ This view has been widely rejected by scholars in more recent decades, and it seems probable that Stilicho did not resort to such a plan until 405 or 406; to date it earlier seems to miss the point of his repeated attempts at conciliation with Arcadius (if not with his ministers) and, by contrast, his positively hostile measures of 405-6. This much, at least, seems certain, and seems to accord with recent opinion. The wider question of the administration of Illyricum in the period immediately preceding Theodosius's death, and of that emperor's last wishes concerning its status, is not so amenable to agreement.

This problem has received a great deal of scholarly attention. On the one hand, it has been argued that on the death of Theodosius, Illyricum belonged to the West, and in the East-West détente that immediately followed the coming to power of Eutropius at the end of 395, the dioceses of Dacia and Macedonia were ceded by Stilicho to the East.¹⁸ A more satisfactory view, however, is that under the plan for the bipartite division of the empire that Theodosius devised after the death of Valentinian II in 392, all Illyricum was to go to the East; it can be demonstrated from both Zosimus and Claudian that after Theodosius's death, all Illyricum was in fact administered by the East, but there is reason to believe that in the

détente following the coming to power of Eutropius, the Pannonian diocese – the western part of Illyricum – was ceded to the West.¹⁹ Thus for all or almost all of Stilicho's "regency," eastern Illyricum was administered by Constantinople, and until 405 or 406 Stilicho acquiesced and Illyricum was simply not an issue of contention. Had it been a major issue during all these years, Claudian would have heralded it, but the poet gives no hint of any claims by Stilicho in that region. According to Claudian, the fault of the eastern government did not lie in blocking Stilicho's occupation of Illyricum, but rather in blocking the military unity of the empire and the special authority of Stilicho.²⁰ The complete failure of this policy put the Illyrian situation in a new light and turned it into a territorial problem, but during the years from 397 to 403, Alaric, while actually a commander of the Eastern Empire, ravaged western Illyricum and invaded northern Italy. It is hardly surprising that in these circumstances Stilicho conceived the idea of turning the tables and using Alaric against the East; there is no reason, however, for believing that he made such a move before 405 (or 406), and even then his long delays in getting the expedition under way seem to have been partly due to his reluctance to take this ultimate hostile step. Stilicho realized that the conquest of Illyricum went hand in hand with the gradual shelving of his grand plan for imperial military unity; Illyricum was a fruitful recruiting ground, and would be an invaluable asset to the West if the West had to stand on its own militarily.²¹

The general question of Stilicho's relations with Alaric over the years must be considered in the wider context of his lifelong desire to pursue the policy of his old master, Theodosius, who viewed all barbarians as potential allies against other barbarians. The ultimate wisdom of this policy was a matter of great debate, even at the time, but the accusations of treachery to which it gave rise, and the stern verdicts given Stilicho by some historians of the British and German schools²² all presuppose

that, had he so wished, he could have annihilated the Visigoths. In light of his military achievements discussed in Chapter 3, there is considerable doubt that he could have accomplished more than he actually did. Alaric had been the ally of Theodosius at the Frigidus, and Stilicho never forgot this. A former ally was always a potential future ally, especially when he was too big to be crushed. But it need not be supposed that Stilicho was in continuous secret compact with Alaric. Stilicho's views on the employment of barbarians were well known, and when plans were eventually made for the invasion of eastern Illyricum, Alaric was openly recognized as a western commander. Any other negotiations and agreements, tacit or formal, between the two were surely of a short-term and ad hoc nature, in view of Alaric's volatile character.

Alaric's plunderings in the Balkans in the years directly following the Frigidus and Stilicho's abortive expeditions of 395 and 397 have provided the basis for some suspicions. The German historian, Otto Seeck, noted for his hostility to Stilicho, made the outright accusation that directly after Theodosius's death, Stilicho released Alaric and permitted him to set off on a plundering campaign in the Balkans purely in order to make himself essential to Arcadius.²³ This is a totally unnecessary hypothesis. Alaric had good reason to revolt, for the Goths had borne the brunt of the fighting at the Frigidus and received no credit for it,²⁴ and besides, Alaric certainly did not require Stilicho's permission in order to revolt. As for Stilicho's two abortive expeditions, it is preposterous to suppose that he twice led an army into Greece intending all the time to lead it away again without achieving anything. If he came to some understanding with Alaric on the 397 expedition, and it is quite likely that he did, it was purely a short-term agreement of convenience, for the purpose of terminating with the minimum of trouble an undertaking that had totally misfired. Stilicho was having difficulties with his own forces, and besides, Alaric at

this stage needed no favors from him, having just been appointed by Eutropius as a commander of the Eastern Empire. Much the same can be said for the agreement made after Pollentia;²⁵ Stilicho's major preoccupation was to get Alaric out of Italy without further weakening his own troops, and the battle of Verona was the consequence of Alaric's breaking of the agreement. All this time Alaric was an agent of the Eastern Empire; in the years following 397 Stilicho may have dreamed of using Alaric as an ally of the whole Roman Empire against its external foes, but it was of necessity a long-term dream because of Alaric's understanding with Constantinople and Stilicho's own difficulties with the eastern government.²⁶ When Alaric invaded Italy, however, possibly with the connivance of the East,²⁷ it is not surprising that Stilicho should have conceived the thought of using this same Alaric as leverage against the East. The fact that he waited several more years before getting such a plan under way is an indication of his overriding concern to do all in his power to conciliate Arcadius. In view of Alaric's impatient and impulsive nature, it is very unlikely that any such agreement was drawn up some years in advance and then kept in cold storage till 405 or 406.

The actual date of the agreement is uncertain, for without the regular stream of propaganda from Claudian, there is less information about events after 404. The agreement was probably made in 405,²⁸ but Stilicho seems to have shrunk from initiating open hostilities with Arcadius for as long as possible, and even after he made the decision and recruited Alaric, a series of delays and *contretemps* completely frustrated his plans. On the death of Arcadius in 408, Stilicho eagerly returned to his original policy of military unity of the whole empire under his own guidance, and mere territorial claims were abandoned. The alliance with Alaric, however, was not broken; when in 407 the Visigothic chieftain made threatening moves toward Italy and demanded a compensation of 4,000 pounds of gold following

the cancellation of the invasion of eastern Illyricum by Honorius, Stilicho forced the senate, much against its will, to pay the indemnity.²⁹ The following year, when Stilicho prepared to take charge of the young Theodosius II in Constantinople, Alaric was to lead a Roman force to Gaul against the usurper Constantine.

This was the fatal faux pas of Stilicho's career, for it provoked the rebellion that led to his downfall, but nothing illustrates his ultimate scheme of values more vividly: Alaric, the feared and hated barbarian, was conciliated and given a Roman command; nothing was done to defend Gaul from the hordes of barbarians that overran it in 406;³⁰ but when in desperation the Roman citizens of Gaul supported Constantine in order to defend themselves, the usurper was to be destroyed at all costs. Stilicho feared nothing more than an emperor with the capacity for independent action. This policy was unacceptable to an increasing number of prominent figures in the West, among them Honorius, and it was unacceptable to the Roman troops of the West. It cost Stilicho his life, and it provided the basis for accusations of treachery against him by his opponents directly after his death, and by several writers of the fifth century and later.³¹ Yet he had attempted a faithful continuation of the policy of Theodosius. Alaric, although he had been troublesome to Theodosius, could serve against the usurper Eugenius. Why then could he not serve against Constantine? If Stilicho used enormous numbers of barbarian federates in his armies, and allowed them to settle within the empire, so had Theodosius. Stilicho's policy of allowing the fighting to be done by barbarians and his skill in engineering the massacre of barbarians by barbarians were borrowed directly from Theodosius. If Stilicho was guilty of treachery, then so was Theodosius. Unlike Stilicho, however, Theodosius had had a relatively successful career, and he had died while master of the situation. The accusation of Stilicho as a traitor is not so much ill-founded as

meaningless, for what was really being questioned was not the loyalty of an individual but the wisdom of a policy. The inability of his contemporaries to distinguish between the individual and the policy led them to impugn the integrity of Stilicho when the failure of his policy became apparent. Contemporary thought insisted on personalizing events and on reducing complicated historical developments to a simplistic narrative; this, together with the wildly unrealistic assumption that Theodosius and Stilicho could easily have crushed and ejected the barbarians from the empire, resulted in the widespread opinion that Stilicho was in collusion with Alaric. Stilicho was, in fact, a scapegoat for something that went far beyond his control,³² and just as Jerome contemplated the plight of Rome and then vented his impotent rage on Stilicho, so certain modern historians such as Bury and Seeck have also chosen to ascribe the blame to him.³³

There were two conflicting contemporary views of the Theodosian barbarian policy; both of them in their extreme forms were exceedingly naive and unrealistic, but both have found some sympathetic echoes from modern writers.³⁴ The view of the “nationalists” was that the empire could and should summon up all its resources and wipe out the barbarian threat with no compromising or temporizing. Synesius, who was active in Constantinople in the years following Theodosius’s death, was a proponent of this view; he made no secret of his dislike for the Theodosian policy,³⁵ though out of deference to Arcadius he ascribed Theodosius’s treatment of the Goths to his great magnanimity—although militarily superior to them he was easily turned to pity. This kind of Roman magnanimity, Synesius feels, is too much for a barbarian mentality to grasp (*De Regno* 25). The Eastern Empire in isolation was, of course, able to follow a “nationalistic” policy of sorts after the rise of Aurelian and the anti-German faction in 399 (though directly after the massacre of the Goths in 400 it was ironically obliged to engage Hun mercenaries); by summoning up its

own internal resources it was able to achieve a great deal, even though this involved the temporary ascendancy of the Isaurians. For the West, however, such a policy was impossibly idealistic; the resources simply did not exist to stem the hordes of barbarians. The other policy—that of the supporters of Theodosius, typified by his apologists Themistius and Libanius—was that the solution to the empire's problems lay in using barbarians to defend its borders against other barbarians, and in gradually assimilating them to Roman ways. This had been done on a modest scale for centuries, but Theodosius and Stilicho wished to expand this practice to a degree that would have placed an impossible strain on the assimilating and civilizing capacities of the empire.³⁶ Thus, the Visigoths remained a foreign body within the empire, as did several other barbarian nations subsequently. The result was the disintegration of the Western Empire.

Both policies failed to save the integrity of the empire, and both were doomed because the vitality of the Roman body politic had fallen to the point where it could neither crush the Goths nor assimilate them.³⁷ Likewise, modern views that profess to see a possible salvation (or resurrection) of the empire of Augustus and Trajan in either of these policies fail to understand the contradictions inherent in the empire of the fifth century. Every civilized person will surely sympathize with Bury's bitter indictment of Stilicho,³⁸ but the scientific historian must decline the view that the whole course of history might have been different had Rome been saved from the Goths in 410, and would probably concur with Várady's view that Stilicho, far from being a traitor, had a thankless task, struggling vainly against historical forces he could not understand.³⁹ There is, in fact, a third modern view, for which there is no ancient counterpart (although a fifth-century A.D. Thucydides, if such a person is imaginable, might have grasped it): nothing could be done to save the empire as it had existed prior to 395 (or 378); its demise

was not owing to anybody's fiendish treachery. With regard to Stilicho's individual contribution, the fairest judgment may well be that of François Paschoud: "Modéré et loyal, aimant les voies obliques de la diplomatie, temporisateur, voire hésitant, il voulut contenter chacun et mécontenta tout le monde en prêtant le flanc aux pires soupçons."⁴⁰

The other ancient accusation made against Stilicho was that of *affectatio regni*, or plotting to usurp imperial power. Zosimus, in his description of the revolt of Ticinum, implies that it was principally by his spreading the rumor that Stilicho planned to murder the young Theodosius II and put his own son Eucherius on the throne, that the ringleader, Olympius, succeeded in stirring up discord among the troops;⁴¹ he also says that after Stilicho's death, his enemies failed to obtain any information against him, even when they questioned various people under torture (5.35). In the law of 22 November 408 by which Honorius intended to justify the killing of Stilicho, the charge is that of stirring up the barbarians, with no mention of *affectatio regni*.⁴² Nevertheless, rumors of his ambitions on the purple for himself or his son seem to have circulated in various versions in the years after his death.⁴³ As for his alleged ambition to become Augustus himself, there is no evidence that such a charge was ever made in his lifetime, even though there was dissatisfaction in some circles with his absolute power in the West;⁴⁴ this charge represents a complete misunderstanding of his personal goals.

The charge that he was planning to murder Theodosius II is grotesque; Stilicho's principal claim to power was his loyalty to the Theodosian family, and the murder of one of its ruling members would surely have been political suicide. His only reason for replacing Theodosius II with Eucherius would have been that his own son would be more amenable to his influence, but if he could succeed in gaining prompt control of the youthful Theodosius directly after Arcadius's death, and with the

authorization of Honorius (who was now senior Augustus), then such a catastrophic murder would be wholly unnecessary. Had the revolt of Ticinum not broken out when it did, Stilicho might well have succeeded in his ambition of bringing both parts of the empire under his guardianship. The fact that he let the revolt take place, though he must have been aware of his weakening grip, shows to what extent he was blinded by this guiding ambition. He may, however, have calculated that if he could win control of the East with its superior resources, even if he temporarily lost the West (he had, in any case, already lost parts of it to Constantine and the barbarians), he would put himself in a stronger ultimate position.

It might not have been necessary, however, to commit a murder in order to win a throne for Eucherius. If Honorius died childless—he may well have been sterile or impotent⁴⁵—there was no successor to the western throne, and Eucherius might easily have been selected. His mother was Serena, niece and adoptive daughter of Theodosius I, and Stilicho had been contemplating a marriage for his son with Galla Placidia, daughter of the same Theodosius I. Eucherius would have been the obvious successor to Honorius.⁴⁶

Stilicho's son was paraded in a formal way as a member of the imperial family, but was not given undue promotions or other special preferences likely to give rise to resentment; by 408, when he must have been about 21, he was still only "tribune and notary," a largely honorific title often bestowed on aristocratic children for whom an important career was planned.⁴⁷ It was presumably also to avoid resentment and undesirable rumors (especially in view of Honorius's continued childlessness) that Stilicho postponed indefinitely the marriage of Eucherius and Galla Placidia, which Claudian hints at in 400 (*Cons. Stil.* 2. 354-61). Clearly, if Honorius had a son by Stilicho's daughter Maria, whom he married in 395,⁴⁸ such a child would be destined for the purple and Stilicho's position

secured; in that case there would be no need to push Eucherius onto the throne. Eucherius was probably being kept in reserve in case Honorius died without progeny, and he would be married to Galla Placidia when the time seemed judicious. Significantly, Placidia was kept unmarried even in her late teens, which was very unusual for a Roman girl.⁴⁹ It is also possible that Stilicho's highest ambition for his son was as his own successor as "protector" of the imperial family, and thereby the wielder of the real power.

Stilicho's entire career, his whole system of personal power and personal advancement, was built on an alliance with the Theodosian family, which had begun with his marriage to Serena. He reinforced this alliance with the marriage of his daughter Maria to Honorius in 395, and following Maria's death, the marriage of his younger daughter, Thermantia, to the emperor in 408;⁵⁰ thus, Stilicho was son-in-law to Theodosius I, father-in-law to Honorius, and, he hoped, grandfather to the future Augustus. If he married Eucherius to Galla Placidia, the young man, besides being a grandson of Theodosius I, would be married to a daughter of the dead emperor and would be the logical successor of Honorius should the latter die childless; in this case, Stilicho would be honored as the emperor's father.⁵¹

In the midst of this carefully contrived parentela-structure, Stilicho planned to remain the most powerful man in the empire. His fondest dream was that one day Arcadius would reawaken to a deeper awareness of family ties, and there would be a grand reconciliation. When Arcadius died, Stilicho's first thought was to assert his influence over the seven-year-old Theodosius II, and this desire blinded him to the pressing situation in Gaul and the imminent revolt in Italy. To his contemporaries, Stilicho's ambitions appeared dynastic; it is not surprising that in later years some people concluded that he was planning to make himself emperor. In the context of the innumerable usurpations that had punctuated the history of the principate,

and in view of the remarkable collegial nature of the office (a new Augustus could have himself admitted to the college without eliminating any of the existing Augusti), one might be tempted to wonder why Stilicho refrained from taking this final step.

This question can be answered on several levels, each of which represents a facet of the whole situation. Most simply, in spite of the greatly increasing importance of barbarians in the Roman army, only two of them in the entire fourth century had made a bid for imperial power, and both of these “usurpations” were short-lived and ill-fated.⁵² Stilicho was a semi-barbarian, and would have encountered strong prejudice had he assumed the purple; he would have risked losing everything in the attempt, and he doubtless gauged well the strength of conservative feeling that would have erupted against him. Rome had grudgingly come to accept barbarian commanders, just as she had, at an earlier date, come to accept the use of barbarian troops, but in the fifth century, when barbarians found themselves wielding formidable power in the empire, none of them ever went so far as to call himself Augustus. It was some time before they could abandon the idea that in some exalted region, far above the realistic power struggles of ordinary men, there should exist an Augustus, a sort of ethereal being who incorporated that misty and indefinable idea called civilization, or Romanness. The barbarians who had fallen under the spell of civilization sought to make themselves its protectors and champions, and they were happy to preserve the Augustus who embodied it like a kind of fragile ikon. They did not think of exchanging places with the ikon, and when the ikon became superfluous, they simply discarded it.

5 | *Constantius the Soldier*

The years after the fall of Stilicho produced a rich crop of usurpers in the Western Empire. Some of these, Constantine (and his short-lived predecessors Marcus and Gratian) in 407, and Heraclian in 413, were Roman commanders who arrogated the imperial title to themselves (or were raised by their troops); Constantine went on to raise his son Constans as his colleague. More interesting, however, are a few instances of puppet emperors set up by powerful individuals who did not aspire to the imperial title themselves. Thus Priscus Attalus was invested with the purple on two occasions by Visigothic kings (by Alaric in 409 and by Athaulf in 414) who were desirous of applying pressure to Honorius and winning for themselves the legitimate status of a military *magisterium*.¹ On both occasions Attalus was removed from his position with very little ceremony when his Gothic masters found him no longer useful. Similarly, under the auspices of two barbarian kings, the Burgundian Gundahar and the Alan Goar, Jovinus was proclaimed Augustus in 412, and in the following year raised his brother Sebastian to be his colleague.² In the above instances, powerful barbarians who could not reasonably

aspire to the purple themselves set up some compliant Roman citizen as their puppet. In another instance of a short-lived usurper, however, Gerontius, the general of Constantine and Constans, revolted against his masters in 409. In spite of his Roman status, Gerontius did not take the imperial power for himself, but instead conferred it on a complete nonentity called Maximus.³

The real successor to the position carved out by Stilicho was Constantius. Born of Roman stock, at Naissus in Dacia, Constantius had fought in many military campaigns from the time of Theodosius I. His promotion to the highest military rank only a couple of years after Stilicho's fall (but not immediately afterward) would indicate that he must have held fairly high positions under Stilicho, who must have favored him.⁴

Constantius's appointment as *magister peditum* is generally dated to 410, though his earliest appearance in this role is in 411, when he destroyed the usurper Constantine at Arles.⁵ In this campaign he had the Goth Ulfilas as his cavalry commander. The most natural interpretation of this is that Ulfilas held the position of *magister equitum praesentalis*, though a case can be made for his having been *magister equitum per Gallias*.⁶ In any case, Ulfilas is not mentioned after this successful campaign. A law of 12 June 413 is addressed to one Gaiso as "*comes et mag. mil.*," and the specific *magisterium* in question is probably to be taken as that of the cavalry.⁷ Ulfilas and Gaiso (and perhaps Sarus)⁸ are the only possible candidates for the position of *magister equitum praesentalis* for the period of Constantius's ascendancy; only the briefest references to them exist, and gaps occur (especially between 413 and 421), when the position was either unoccupied or held by someone of minimal importance. This is reminiscent of the situation under Stilicho, when the only evident candidates for the *magisterium equestre* were the two shadowy figures of Jacobus and Vincentius.⁹ Once again, it seems that the *magister peditum* concentrated the *de facto* power in his own hands. The same fluidity and imprecision in titulature as under the previous *generalissimos* continues. In effect, after a

a gap of only a couple of years, Constantius stepped right into the shoes of Stilicho. He could not yet call himself *parens principum*, but this came later when he married Galla Placidia, daughter of Theodosius I. Finally, the fact that he could claim to be a Roman made it possible for him to do what Stilicho could never do, namely reach for the purple himself as colleague of Honorius and Theodosius II.

Stilicho's military titles of "*comes*" and "*magister utriusque militiae*" by no means summed up his unique position of power behind the throne; the best terminology he could devise was "*parens principum*." Succeeding *generalissimos* modified this to the formalized, or semi-formalized, title of "*parens patriciusque*" followed by a possessive denoting the emperor. When Stilicho formalized the word "*parens*" as the epitome of his claim to special power, it took on a new and pregnant sense; Stilicho was clearly to be distinguished from the other relatives of Honorius and Arcadius. Constantius's contribution to the terminology of the *generalissimos* was to adopt the term *patricius* and use it in a similarly pregnant manner. The honorific title of *patricius* had been revived, or established in a new form, by Constantine I as a "personal distinction, granted by the emperor to his nearest friends and highest officials,"¹⁰ and prior to Constantius, it had been held by several individuals who, while not *magistri militum*, had wielded considerable, if not supreme, power. In the East, Petronius, father-in-law of Valens, had been a *patricius*, and under Arcadius the rank had been held by Eutropius, and perhaps also by Rufinus.¹¹ In the West, and immediately prior to Constantius's accession to the *magisterium militare*, Jovius (or Jovianus) had been praetorian prefect and *patricius* under Honorius, and had then (late in 409) deserted to the side of the usurper Attalus;¹² most interesting is the remark of Olympiodorus (frg. 13) that after this change of sides, Jovius (Jovianus) was called "*patrician of Attalus*" ("*πατρικίος Ἀττάλου ὀνομασθεὶς*"); this expression seems to directly anticipate later usage.

Constantius was the first private soldier to obtain the patriciate, but it may have been simply granted to him as a special honor for services rendered with no intention of distinguishing him from the various other holders of the title. No trace survives of any law assigning to Constantius or to any of his successors any special powers in their capacity as patricii. When accompanied by the possessive denoting the emperor, however, “patricius” quickly took on a specially pregnant meaning similar to the “parens” as used by Stilicho.¹³ The precise date that Constantius was granted the patriciate is in dispute, but it would seem to be 415 or, at the latest, early 416.¹⁴ Equally uncertain are the circumstances in which the honor was granted; it may well have been connected with Constantius’s outstanding diplomatic triumph in negotiating a settlement with the Visigoths under Vallia, and restoring Galla Placidia, who had been their hostage since 410, to her brother.¹⁵ More important, however, than a knowledge of the exact circumstances surrounding Constantius’s elevation to the patriciate is a realization of the significance of his actions: starting on the foundation laid by Stilicho, he reached for the very honor that Stilicho, because of his birth, could not or would not take; but unlike Stilicho, Constantius would not stop until he was made Augustus.

Constantius’s successors were to transform the title of patricius (unlike the more inflexible and encumbering title of Augustus) and make of it, along with parens, which had been Stilicho’s claim to power, the basis of a new power title that would overshadow that of the emperor himself. For several years Constantius’s keen ambition of marrying Galla Placidia had been frustrated, first by her captivity among the Visigoths and then by her own reluctance to be his wife. In 417 Honorius finally pressured her into the marriage,¹⁶ and Constantius could at last claim recognition as a member of the imperial family. Like Stilicho in his day, Constantius was now parens principum;

in a letter of 17 April 418, Honorius refers to him as *parens patriciusque noster*, the first surviving instance of this formula.¹⁷

Constantius had received his first consulate in 414.¹⁸ His second was granted him for the year 417; his colleague in office was Honorius himself, a mark of special honor. On the first day of that year, Constantius married Placidia and was thus received into the imperial family.¹⁹ In the following year Placidia bore him a daughter, Justa Grata Honoria, and on 2 July 419 she bore him a son who was named Flavius Placidus Valentinianus.²⁰ These names recall Placidia's imperial ancestry on both sides of her family, for she was daughter of Theodosius I and granddaughter, on her mother's side, of Valentinian I. The names were evidently chosen with care, and in the light of Honorius's continued childlessness, the infant Valentinian was clearly marked out for the succession, a point that was emphasized by the title of *nobilissimus puer* conferred on him by Honorius on the compulsion of Placidia.²¹ At this point Constantius had achieved a position of power equal to that of Stilicho at his peak. By 419 he was acting as virtual emperor, as is reflected in the exchange of correspondence between him and the *praefectus urbi* Symmachus on the occasion of a disputed papal election; here the prefect addresses Constantius as "domine semper illustrissime et sacratissime, magnifice meritoque sublimis ac praecelse patrone."²² The rare honor of a third consulate followed in 420 and an inscription recapitulates his honors to this point: "Reparatori rei publicae et parenti invictissimorum principum Fl. Constantio v. c. inlustri comiti et magistro utriusque militiae, patricio et tertio cons. ordinario."²³

One final honor remained, that of the emperorship. Stilicho had preferred not to take such a step, restrained either by the thought of his half-barbarian origin or by a realization that the purple would add nothing to his real power. To Constantius's successors it was clear that the purple was not where the real power lay. Constantius, in fact, is the only generalissimo

who chose to be elevated to the rank of Augustus; shortly after the completion of his third consulate, on 8 February 421,²⁴ he was raised by Honorius to the position of co-emperor.

This may have been the fulfillment of an ambition of many years' standing, for it accords perfectly with the logical step-by-step progression of Constantius's career, or the impulse may have come from Placidia. Constantius and Placidia may well have been motivated solely by a desire to make the way to the throne more secure for their son Valentinian, for they may have feared an ambition on the part of the eastern government to reunite the empire under Theodosius II when the childless Honorius died. They may have misjudged the eastern mood and felt genuine surprise at Constantinople's subsequent refusal to recognize Constantius as Augustus, or, more probably, they may have anticipated such a refusal but felt that a strong western move was nonetheless necessary. Relations between the two courts had begun to deteriorate toward the end of Constantius's life, and a quarrel between the Pope and the Patriarch of Constantinople over the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Illyricum may have signalled a revival of controversy over the general status of this area.²⁵ At the time of his death, Constantius was planning hostilities against the East.²⁶

Woefully inadequate sources do not contain details concerning the exact circumstances and frame of mind in which Constantius reached the decision to become Augustus. It seems, however, that his elevation to what was nominally the highest rank in the empire was a far from happy move. That he (or his wife) insisted on it is suggested in a remark from Olympiodorus (frg. 34) that Honorius was not altogether willing to appoint him. Olympiodorus goes on to say:

ἐφίσταται νόσος Κωνσταντίῳ, καὶ μετέμελεν αὐτῷ ἡ βασιλεία, ὅτι οὐκέτι ἦν αὐτῷ ἐπ' ἀδείας, ὥσπερ πρότερον, ἐξιέναι τε καὶ ἀπιέναι ὅπῃ καὶ ὅπως βούλοιο,

καὶ ὅτι οὐκ ἐξῆν αὐτῷ χρῆσθαι βασιλεύοντι οἷς ἔθος
εἶχε χρῆσθαι παιγνίοις. τέλος ἐπὶ βασιλεύσας μῆνας
. . . πλευριτικῇ νόσῳ τελευτᾷ . . . ²⁷

Modern writers have expatiated on the obvious irksomeness that the imperial role would present for an active soldier.²⁸ Theodosius the Great had been a very active soldier, though in the quarter-century since his death his inactive sons had contributed much to turning the Augustus into a beautiful but practically useless ikon. Nevertheless, one cannot but feel that Constantius had had every opportunity to observe what the role of Augustus involved before assuming it himself, and that he chose to adopt a role that he found highly uncongenial is one reason for speculating that the impulse may have come from his wife.²⁹ The breakdown in his health at this point need in no way have been due to “nervous depression,” and Olympiodorus’s scant remarks leave many questions about his motivations (and his health) unanswered. The experiment was not repeated by any of Constantius’s military successors in the West, which is the most compelling proof that the purple added nothing to the generalissimos’ real power.

An examination of the policies pursued by Constantius during the period of his ascendancy, shows him to have been a close follower of Stilicho. The striking difference, of course, is that Stilicho, to the end of his life, was ready to press his claim of guardianship over both emperors and never really dropped the ambition of making himself supreme military commander in both parts of the empire. This did not, however, keep him from building a strong position for himself in the West as *magister utriusque militiae*, which he lost apparently only because his eastern ambitions blinded him to the dangers building up in the West. Constantius and his successors built their policies not on the ambitions and claims of Stilicho but on his concrete achievements. This meant that they accepted the division of

the empire as a *fait accompli*, and concentrated their efforts upon strengthening the Western Empire and their position in it.³⁰ That the massive influx of barbarians would soon lead to the total disintegration of the Western Empire could hardly have been foreseen in Constantius's day; the more turbulent situation in the West simply provided more ample scope for the career of an ambitious military man than he could have found in the East.

The experience of Stilicho, then, was clearly the supreme formative influence on the policies of Constantius. Indeed, there is every reason to suppose that Constantius felt a strong sympathy for his predecessor, under whom the early stages of his career were developed. This would explain the savage revenge he took on Olympius, the man who had engineered Stilicho's fall and had persecuted his adherents; on Constantius's orders, Olympius was beaten to death with clubs after having had his ears cut off.³¹ The man who had actually slain Stilicho was one Heraclian; he went on to serve Honorius loyally as count of Africa, and then in 413, the very year in which his devoted services were being rewarded with the consulate, he revolted and led an attempted invasion of Italy, which failed dismally and resulted in his death.³² It is likely that this revolt took place soon after the killing of Olympius and was prompted by fear (or actual knowledge) on the part of Heraclian that the all-powerful Constantius was working for his fall and was planning to carry out a similar revenge on him.³³

In general, Constantius seems to have preserved and enhanced Stilicho's administrative and military arrangements, which were, after all, greatly to his own benefit.³⁴ The most striking advantage enjoyed by Constantius, in comparison to Stilicho, was the fact that he was a full-blooded Roman and therefore acceptable to the conservative and anti-barbarian elements; even had he never chosen to become emperor, his Roman birth would have spared him much of the animosity that Stilicho aroused. At the same time Constantius held a

severely orthodox religious position³⁵ (which Stilicho had avoided until a late stage in his career when he felt it necessary to curry favor in orthodox circles), and this became even more marked after his marriage with the strictly orthodox Placidia. All this finds a reflection in Christian writers, who praise Constantius and contrast him with barbarian generals.³⁶ It is not unreasonable to suppose that Constantius, like any other successful public figure, would have made use of whatever advantages he had to win credit with this or that segment of the population; unlike the pious Placidia, he did not enjoy the automatic prerogatives that derived from birth into the imperial family. To make inferences, however, about Constantius's personal feelings is hazardous in view of meager sources. One cannot assume that he had a personal antipathy for barbarians simply on the strength of a law forbidding anyone from appearing in Rome or its environs in the distinguishing marks of a German — long hair and animal skins.³⁷ Rome was the center of aristocratic tradition, but had become something of a museum city, a place in which to relive memories of the past and try to escape the grim realities of the Germanic presence; one cannot attach much significance to such a regulation, especially when it was restricted to the area of Rome.

More significant is Constantius's realistic handling of the barbarians as a military presence not to be shrugged off, and here he stands directly in the tradition of Theodosius and Stilicho. Barbarians were used even in the highest military positions; Ulfilas and Gaiso served under Constantius as *magistri equitum*, and there could be no question of attempting to exclude Germans from the armies as had been done in the East.³⁸ This was a question of realities, not of personal inclinations. The western command used barbarians, whenever possible, to do the actual fighting, and consistently tried to place barbarians against barbarians on the principle that their mutual slaughter could only benefit Rome. Replacements could always easily be

found. Thus, on the rise of the usurper Jovinus in Gaul following the destruction of Constantine in 411, Constantius withdrew to Italy, and the best explanation of this move seems to be that favored by Oost: "Like his successors in the Byzantine Empire in the East for centuries after him, Constantius must save his army by strategy and commit it to battle only when the odds were in his favor."³⁹ Shortly afterward, the Visigoths did the job for him; in 412 or 413 some agreement, the details of which are obscure, was worked out between Ravenna and Athaulf, and the Visigoths, with the blessing of the Romans, were packed off to Gaul to deal with the usurper.⁴⁰ A very similar situation occurred a few years later: when the final settlement was made between Rome and the Visigoths in 416, the latter happened to be in Spain, and in that very year, as soon as he was able to get them a supply of grain, Constantius turned them against the Alans, Vandals, and Sueves, who, for some years, had been ravaging Spain; it was not until 418 that he eventually settled them in Aquitaine.⁴¹

Where there could be no realistic consideration of annihilating barbarians or of driving them out—where, in effect, their permanent presence within the empire had to be accepted—Constantius followed the now standard policy of settling them as *foederati*. A great deal of responsibility for the delay in settling the Visigoths must be ascribed to Constantius's uncompromising attitude toward them so long as they refused to return Placidia. A famous anecdote by Orosius tells that Athaulf had become well disposed toward Rome and was anxious to reach a settlement, and that this was due in particular to the influence that Placidia had on him during her captivity;⁴² we might well speculate that after her marriage with Athaulf, Placidia would not have chosen to return to Ravenna and the apparently unwelcome suit of Constantius. Thus it was not until after the death of Athaulf and the return of Placidia that a permanent settlement became possible. This was a matter, however, in which Constantius's personal ambitions (and perhaps

a strong personal regard for Placidia) and also the pride of the imperial family were deeply involved. The matter cannot be taken to indicate anti-barbarian sentiment on Constantius's part.⁴³

The Gothic settlement, when finally made, was a good one under the circumstances, and must go down in history as the major constructive act of Constantius's supremacy. As *foederati* the Visigoths remained under the obligation of fighting for Rome, and became an integral part of Constantius's reorganization of the Gallic defences; at the same time they were carefully excluded from the Mediterranean, and Rome remained in full control of the land route to Spain. After the Visigoths were removed from Spain, the principle of using barbarians against barbarians was applied yet again, and the Sueves seem to have been admitted as *foederati*. All in all, Constantius's dispositions of the years following 416 represent the first systematic restoration of order to Gaul and Spain since the catastrophes of 407, and his handling of the barbarian presence there indicates a clear grasp of the realities and potentialities of the situation.⁴⁴ This settlement laid the foundation upon which Aetius was later to build his position of power in Gaul, and made it possible eventually for the Romans, with massive barbarian support, to stop Attila in his tracks.

6 | *Aetius's Struggle for Power*

The death of Constantius in 421, after his unhappy experiment as Augustus, left a certain power vacuum at the court of Ravenna. Two years of confused in-fighting followed as Galla Placidia strove to maintain control over her half-brother Honorius, and as her enemy Castinus, emerging now as the most powerful western general, pursued his ambition of becoming the new power behind the throne. Placidia's young son Valentinian would probably rule the West after Honorius's death, or might even rule beside him as colleague should Honorius enjoy a long life; Placidia naturally hoped that the boy would prove a worthy successor to his grandfather, Theodosius I, and would eventually be strong enough to command armies in his own right and break the pattern of overweening generals that had developed during the reign of Honorius. Consequently, after Constantius's death, she apparently embarked upon a policy of foiling the ambitions of any general who showed signs of becoming too powerful for her liking.

Castinus had held the rank of comes domesticorum during the ascendancy of Constantius, and had campaigned against the Franks.¹ Just after (or possibly just before) Constantius's death, he had been made magister militum and led an important but ill-fated expedition against the Vandals in Spain.² Boniface, a friend of Placidia's who later emerged as her staunch supporter in the feud with Aetius, was attached to this expedition in a subordinate command. Even before they left Italy, Boniface quarrelled with Castinus, deserted him, and made off to Africa. In Baetica, Castinus first experienced some success against the Vandals and put them under blockade; then he quarrelled with his Visigothic allies from Aquitaine, upon whom he was heavily dependent, and they betrayed him, bringing about his defeat.³

Castinus countered this setback by ascribing it, perhaps not without justification, to a plot fostered against him by Placidia and carried out by her friends Boniface and the Visigoths. He succeeded in arousing considerable sentiment against Placidia and in alienating her from Honorius, with the result that she was exiled from court and forced to flee to Constantinople. Castinus seems to have remained in good standing because he retained his position, and, following Honorius's death in August 423, his nomination as consul for the following year would seem to indicate an understanding with Theodosius II, now sole ruler of the empire.⁴ Whether Theodosius planned to continue indefinitely as sole Augustus is not known; presumably, Galla Placidia was availing herself of the opportunity afforded by her presence in Constantinople to urge Theodosius to raise Valentinian, now four years old, to the purple. In any event, some unknown cause of alarm, or at least grave dissatisfaction, beset Castinus, because before the year 423 was out he had decided that his ambitions (and perhaps even the interests of the West) would best be served by backing a usurper on the western throne. The individual in question was a certain John, a civil servant but, very significantly, not a soldier.⁵

Theodosius reacted energetically to this usurpation. He refused to temporize with John in any way, and prepared a substantial expedition to send to Italy. Realizing that a separate emperor was needed for the West, he conferred the rank of Caesar upon Valentinian (implying that the rank of Augustus would follow later) and recognized Placidia's status as Augusta; she would rule in her son's behalf so long as required.⁶ John's control over the West was shaky; he failed entirely to take Africa, which was held by Boniface on Placidia's behalf. In 425 the eastern forces entered Ravenna; John was captured and later put to death. Castinus disappeared from history at this point, driven into exile:

. . . quia videbatur Johannes sine coniventia ipsius
regnum non potuisse praesumere. (Prosper 1288)

Shortly after, another supporter of the usurper, Aetius, arrived with a strong force of Huns, which had been solicited by John before his downfall. After some fighting with the loyal forces, possibly just long enough to impress Placidia with a show of his strength and acquaint himself with the realities of the changed situation, Aetius came to terms with her.⁷ John was dead, and it must have been clear that Valentinian, with the backing of Theodosius and the prestige of membership in the imperial family, would be the next western emperor; to him, therefore, Aetius tendered his allegiance, along with a demand for a high-ranking position. He was appointed comes and obtained a high military command in Gaul.⁸ For the present, real power, the actual control of the boy-emperor, was in the hands of Placidia; under her, the supreme military commander was the magister militum, Felix. Aetius aspired to this real power, combining the supreme military command in the West with control over the person and policies of Valentinian. To

achieve this goal, he had to struggle against the ambitions of rival generals and, worse, against the bitter opposition of Galla Placidia.

Aetius was born of Roman stock, probably about 391, in Durostorum, a town of Lower Moesia.⁹ His father, Gaudentius, was a prominent local citizen and a general under Stilicho; his mother was a distinguished Italian. Aetius's official career began in boyhood.¹⁰ In his youth, Aetius had spent three years as a hostage with Alaric, probably starting in 405, and a further period among the Huns. During this phase of his life, Aetius learnt the military arts. The experience also gave him a solid understanding of barbarians, indispensable to his future career, as were the close friendships he formed among the Huns.¹¹ Exact dates of this period with the Huns are not available, but after the usurpation of John, Aetius exercised the position of *cura palatii*, and perhaps also comes domesticorum; in either case, he would have enjoyed the rank of a comes rei militaris.¹² When hostilities threatened between John and the eastern government, Aetius was dispatched to the Huns to obtain help from that quarter on the strength of his contacts there. This force arrived too late to be of use to John, but it enabled Aetius to drive a hard bargain with the new western regime. He retained his rank of comes and went off to win military renown in Gaul.

The first rival with whom Aetius had to deal was Felix, who held the position of magister utriusque militiae.¹³ The sources on the respective positions of these two men in the late 420s are either unclear or downright contradictory. The view of the majority of scholars has been that Felix received the magisterium in 425 but was not raised to the rank of patricius until 429.¹⁴ This view is based on the statement of Prosper Tiro, under the year 429, that "Felice ad patriciam dignitatem provecto, Aetius magister militum factus est," and some scholars have even taken this to imply that in that year Felix was deprived of his magisterium, which was then turned over to Aetius, and by way of compensation Felix

received the patriciate.¹⁵ This suggestion is most improbable; starting from Constantius, the term “patricius” came to be part of the special formula “parens patriciusque noster,” which designated the reigning generalissimo. Without the military magisterium, which provided the ultimate basis of power, the patriciate was a purely honorific position, and to receive it after having lost the magisterium could hardly be regarded as a compensation, much less a promotion. Prosper’s statement is flatly contradicted by another chronicler, Hydatius, who reports under the year 425: “Felix patricius ordinatur et magister militum,” which decidedly makes more sense.¹⁶

There also arises the question of precisely what position Aetius held in the years from 425 to 429 and which magisterium, if any, he received in 429. He certainly was, at some point, *magister militum per Gallias*,¹⁷ though he may, indeed, have been formally elevated to this rank only in 429, after having held the rank of *comes* during the preceding four years. Whatever his official position during these years, his achievements made it clear that he was the dominating figure in Gaul.¹⁸ The exact relationship between Aetius, Felix, and Placidia is unclear owing to the meager information, but the broad lines of the situation are quite clear: in the absence of a strong figure of authority, Aetius, Felix, and Boniface were maneuvering for power while Placidia played them off one against another; at the same time, she was desperately trying to preserve some freedom of movement for herself, and for Valentinian when he should reach a suitable age. Placidia, who had had first-hand experience of two generalissimos, naturally had an antipathy to submitting to the domination of a third.

By 430 Felix had an advantage in terms of rank—he was a patrician—but was overshadowed by the growing military prestige of Aetius. From this period comes evidence of much intriguing on the part of Felix, which makes him the prime suspect in the plot to ruin Boniface in 427. Boniface, who had

held Africa on behalf of the legitimate government during John's usurpation, had built a strong position of power there. Placidia was persuaded to doubt his loyalty and to summon him to Ravenna. Some suggestion may have been made to Boniface that he would be destroyed if he obeyed; in any event, he refused to obey the summons, and consequently was embroiled in a rebellion against the government for the next two years. Felix was assigned the task of sending an expedition to crush Boniface, but it was unsuccessful.¹⁹ Apart from this episode, Felix seems to have been responsible for a couple of murders during this period,²⁰ and it is highly probable that he was also plotting against Aetius. Felix was forestalled when, at Aetius's orders, he was murdered in 430.²¹

This left Aetius in an undoubted position of superiority that was formalized, in that same year or the next, by his promotion, probably to the rank of *magister peditum praesentalis*.²² His major rival now was Boniface, whose fortunes had begun to rise again since 429, or even earlier,²³ when good relations were restored between him and Ravenna, and who was evidently now being used by Placidia as a counterbalance to Aetius. Although, once again, the outline of events can easily be deduced, the specific titles held by Aetius and Boniface in the period 430-32 and the exact times at which they were granted are as unclear as are the corresponding details concerning Aetius and Felix in the period 425-30. The sources seem to emphasize the equal standing of Aetius and Boniface as their rivalry came to a head; this is very reminiscent of the situation between Aetius and Felix a couple of years earlier.²⁴ Both Aetius and Boniface were *magistri militum*; whether they held this rank simultaneously, with Aetius nominally occupying the *magisterium pedestre* and Boniface the *magisterium equestre*,²⁵ or whether they held it in succession, with Aetius being obliged at some point to cede it to Boniface, is uncertain. The impression that emerges is that Placidia was carefully trying to dispense ranks and titles in such

a way as to preserve a balance between the two men. Furthermore, she might have anticipated that this new balancing game would have a similar outcome to that of Aetius and Felix, namely, the elimination and death of one of the rivals.

The bestowing of the patriciate upon Boniface in 432²⁶ must have been viewed by Aetius as an acute threat, for it permitted his rival to combine the two distinctions, *magisterium* and *patriciate*, that Constantius had made the basis of his dictatorship. Aetius's first consulate in 432 was, very understandably, quite insufficient to appease him. In that year Boniface returned to Italy on the summons of Placidia, accompanied, presumably, by the most substantial force he could muster, and Aetius marched on Italy from Gaul. For the first time, a civil war was fought not over who should be emperor, but over who should be the emperor's *generalissimo*. In these changed times, the latter was decidedly the more rewarding goal.²⁷

In the battle near Ariminum, Boniface was victorious, but, possibly as a consequence of a wound received, he died three months later.²⁸ Aetius, who had placed himself outside the law by his action against Boniface,²⁹ fled first to his estates, then to Rome, to Dalmatia, and eventually to Pannonia and the Huns. From their king, Rugila, he obtained military backing that enabled him to return to Italy in 433 and force a fresh settlement with Placidia. On this occasion he did not even have the pretence of supporting an emperor, legitimate or otherwise; he was unashamedly working for himself – if indirectly for the empire – and was demanding what he considered to be his just reward. He had eliminated his two serious rivals and was uncontestably the most able commander in the West. Boniface's successor, Sebastian, was sent into exile, and Aetius was now master of the situation, as reflected in his elevation to the *patriciate*.³⁰ He also married Boniface's widow, Pelagia, allegedly in accordance with Boniface's dying wishes, and thereby succeeded not only in obtaining Pelagia's wealth but in winning

over by a sort of inheritance of loyalty the *buccellarii*, or former private army, of Boniface.³¹

For the next twenty years Aetius was the undisputed generalissimo of the West. In 437 the eighteen-year-old Valentinian went to Constantinople to marry Theodosius II's daughter Licinia Eudoxia, as had been arranged long before. From this point on, Valentinian was presumably at the stage where he could dispense with his mother's regency and begin to govern on his own account. This would make it even easier for Aetius to exert his influence on the government, because Valentinian was inexperienced and apparently not of strong character.

It was also in 437 that Aetius held his second consulate. Significantly his colleague in this office was his own lieutenant, Sigisvult. For some reason, the eastern government apparently agreed to the nomination of two consuls from the West. The erection of a statue in Aetius's honor in the Atrium Libertatis must be dated during this period. The inscription lists his honors up to this point and mentions his military achievements:

[F]l (avio) Aetio viro inl (ustri) comiti . . . ne]c non et magistro militum per Gallias quas dudum [o]b iuratas bello pace victorias Romano Imperio reddidit, magistro utriusq(ue) militiae et secundo consuli ordinario atq(ue) patricio semper rei publicae [i]npenso omnibusq(ue) donis militarib(us) ornato. . . .³²

A portion near the beginning of the inscription, unfortunately, is missing; it may have included the positions held by Aetius prior to 425.

The culmination of Aetius's career was his third consulate in 446, celebrated in the second panegyric of Merobaudes.³³ The honor of a third consulate had been reserved, for more than three centuries, for members or prospective members of the imperial family.³⁴ It had earlier been bestowed upon

Constantius, a genuine *parens principum* by virtue of his marriage to a member of the imperial family. Aetius did not meet this qualification; at this time he had not implemented, and perhaps not even conceived, the plan he later foisted upon Valentinian, of betrothing his son Gaudentius to Valentinian's daughter Placidia. Even if this marriage ever took place, Aetius could hardly claim to be a close relative of an emperor, at least until such time as Gaudentius might succeed Valentinian. Nevertheless, Aetius's ambition to follow in the footsteps of Stilicho and Constantius is clear, and presumably, he did not wish to fall short of his predecessors in either distinction or power.

The military *magisterium* did not of itself put a general in a position of supreme power. At this time, there were three *magistri* in the West: the two *praesentales* (*peditum* and *equitum*) and the *magister militum per Gallias*. Whether these positions were occupied continuously is not known,³⁵ but a number of generals occupied them both during and between the periods of supremacy of the great *generalissimos* and did not aspire, or were in various ways discouraged from aspiring, to a position of supreme power. Once Aetius had, by naked force, disposed of his two dangerous rivals, Felix and Boniface, he was never again faced with any serious threat from the army; for the rest of his lifetime his fellow *magistri* were faithful, and quite devoted subordinates. Although the three *magistri* may have been theoretically equal, one of them, in reality, held the supreme power and would not have hesitated to crush a rival. Against the background of a fairly rapid turnover of *magistri*, the relatively long supremacies of the great *generalissimos* (thirteen years for Stilicho, eleven for Constantius, and sixteen for Ricimer) created some stability and continuity.

To compensate for the complete lack of legal foundation for such supremacy, the *generalissimos* had recourse to high-sounding but imprecise titulature. So Stilicho exploited his marriage into the imperial family, and Constantius made rather

special use of the patriciate. Aetius never achieved parentela with an emperor, though he felt it incumbent upon him to signal his status by matching the three consulates of Constantius. Furthermore, he was directly in line with his predecessor in his special use of the title "patricius," marked by the use of a genitive or possessive denoting the emperor. One must not look here, as was remarked before, for precise terminology or clearly defined functions and powers. At this growing point of new political development, the function that, for convenience, is termed "generalissimo" had not been formalized and was quite devoid of any legal or constitutional status. The phenomenon was so transient that no fixed name was ever coined to describe it. Since, in the West, this function evolved rapidly into something quite different, namely the Germanic kingship begun by Odovacar, and since, in the East, the emperors were able to re-assert their power in the course of the fifth century, neither contemporary nor later authors can be expected to have had a clear view of what was happening, much less express their reactions in precise terminology.

Perhaps the most formal version of Aetius's title appears in a law of Valentinian from the year 445: "comes et magister utriusque militiae et patricius."³⁶ In addition, the laws and other sources provide a wide variety of titles and designations for Aetius, reminiscent of the lack of precision already encountered in the case of Stilicho.³⁷ More confusing is a similar looseness in the references the sources make to the other *magistri militum* of the period of Aetius's ascendancy. Thus, references to Sigisvult, Litorius, Asturius, Merobaudes, and Vitus, leave varying degrees of uncertainty as to just what position each held.³⁸ Of these figures, Sigisvult was the most important; he was Aetius's right-hand man. He held the consulate with Aetius in 437, and there is no doubt that for some time he was the other *magister militum praesentalis* (*magister equitum*), though the date of his tenure of this post is uncertain.³⁹ Litorius was surely

magister militum per Gallias, and never magister equitum.⁴⁰ The other three men have been variously viewed as magistri equitum in succession to Sigisvult, or magistri militum per Gallias, or even holders of a special Spanish command temporarily upgraded to the level of a magisterium.⁴¹

The rather imprecise references to the magisteria of these men has formed at least part of the basis for the development of a theory attributing to Placidia a policy of what might be called debasement by inflation.⁴² According to this view, the court of Ravenna, under the inspiration of Placidia, was attempting to undermine Aetius's position by multiplying the number of patricii and magistri and thereby making the titles meaningless. The theory derives a certain plausibility because it ascribes to Placidia a tendency in keeping with her temperament and rampant in the age in which she lived, namely, the tendency to confound symbol with reality. Placidia may have believed that by tinkering with symbols she could alter reality. In actuality, the Huns, and not the titles conferred by Valentinian, gave Aetius his power; the titles were merely an attempt to put the power into words, to formalize or define it, and above all to make it respectable. Placidia, as a consequence of the policy ascribed to her, thought that she could destroy power by debasing titles, just as it is commonly believed today that one can destroy inequality by debasing currency. The surest indication that Aetius felt no threat from potential rivals is that he did not feel the need to devise a new formula to designate the position of power he had no intention of relinquishing; had the titles been significantly debased, he could easily have devised new ones. If Valentinian ever inclined to the particular philosophy ascribed to his mother, he acknowledged its utter inefficacy some years later when he chose a more concrete method for destroying Aetius. Even then, however, Aetius's power position was not destroyed; it was simply inherited a few years later by Ricimer.

Aetius certainly held, in fact if not in theory, the ascendancy over the other *magistri*, and their appointments, far from being made as an attempt to undermine him, were probably made on his recommendation. If the court of Ravenna ever conceived a policy of alienating Aetius's lieutenants from him by bestowing upon them honors that might spur their ambition to take Aetius's seat, the scheme got nowhere. The abrupt recall of Merobaudes from Spain following his success there can very plausibly be interpreted as an attempt by the court to strike at Aetius through one of his favorites,⁴³ though this interpretation hardly seems to go hand in hand with the view that Merobaudes' appointment to the *magisterium* was also aimed to hurt Aetius.

The view of Aetius's position as *generalissimo* is complicated by the question of whether any of his fellow *magistri* in the period of his supremacy held the *patriciate*. So important had the title become when borne by a military commander that in some sources of the fifth and sixth centuries, along with the more common and official use of "patrician" to refer to the civilian distinction that had existed since Constantine the Great, it is also employed in the sense of "supreme commander" or, indeed, "generalissimo." It was sometimes applied to individuals who were never formally granted the honor of the *patriciate*,⁴⁴ and it might actually be more appropriate, in some of these cases, to speak of an additional meaning acquired in current usage, rather than to impute to the sources false attributions of the civilian title.

The evidence for Merobaudes' *patriciate* is slim, and rests mainly on his own remark that the eastern emperor raised him "*ad honoris maximi nomen*," which can be interpreted to mean various things other than the *patriciate*.⁴⁵ The evidence for the *patriciate* of Sigisvult is of a more explicit nature,⁴⁶ and such scholarly opposition to it as exists seems to derive from a wish to impose some degree of neatness and logic on the rather disorderly

evidence by fostering the view that the combination of patriciate and military magisterium had by this time become the badge of the generalissimo. The implication of this theory would be that if Sigisvult or any other of Aetius's fellow commanders received the patriciate, he would immediately be in open rivalry with Aetius and present a patent challenge to his supremacy.⁴⁷ Two competitors for this position could never have existed for any length of time without producing a convulsion at the highest military level similar to that which attended upon Aetius's elimination of his earlier rivals. That this did not take place indicates that Aetius felt no threat from any of his lieutenants, for he obviously knew how to act when he felt endangered. He probably concurred in any honors that were bestowed upon them, and there is no evidence that he wanted to liquidate anyone else; neither, however, did he feel that his own position should be redefined by the institution of new titles or formulae.

The patriciate, in the special military sense in which it was used by Constantius and his successors in the West, was more than the honorific title Constantine the Great had made of it; for a time it seems to have been regarded as a sort of high-ranking magistracy. This appears in the way the word is used in reference to Constantius and Aetius; in English it becomes necessary to use the definite article in referring to the patricius. Constantius, as patrician, had his own *cancellarius*,⁴⁸ and in a Roman inscription of 450 or 451 there is reference to a *scriniarius inl. patriciae sedis*.⁴⁹ Aetius, like his predecessors, construed his duties as being by no means exclusively those of a military commander and he intervened at will in any aspect of civil administration. Laws show him concerning himself with the appointment of Gallic bishops, the improvement of the lot of children whose parents had sold them because of poverty, and the rationalization of the method of supplying hogs to the city of Rome.⁵⁰ Even in military and diplomatic affairs Aetius

acted in a way that more befits a ruler than a general. Priscus, in referring to an embassy to Attila, says that it was sent

παρὰ Ἀετίου καὶ τοῦ βασιλεύοντος τῶν ἑσπε-
ρίων Ῥωμαίων.⁵¹

Aetius is mentioned first, making his superior position clear; the emperor of the moment does not even merit mentioning by name. Finally, Constantius of Lyon, in *Vit. Germ.* 28, referring to one of the settlements of Alans by Aetius, describes him as

Aetius, qui tum rem publicam gubernabat.⁵²

7 | *Defending the Empire*

Unlike the majority of the *generalissimos*, Aetius was not a barbarian or a semibarbarian. A first-hand acquaintance with the ways of barbarians, and a realistic assessment of the present state of the empire and the place of barbarians in it, were essential to a successful public career in this period. If Constantius fulfilled these requirements admirably, Aetius could boast even higher credentials. Although he was not born one, Aetius was in many ways more a barbarian than Stilicho. One cannot overestimate the importance of the time he spent as a hostage, in the impressionable years of youth, with the Visigoths and the Huns. Aetius's wife, the mother of his second son Gaudentius, was of royal Gothic descent.¹ At some stage, his elder son, Carpilio, was sent as a hostage to the Huns.² For many years Aetius maintained a close friendship with the Huns; he sent a Latin secretary to serve Attila, and Attila in turn sent him gifts.³ The Huns supplied him with military aid, and in one crucial difficulty of his career, just after his battle with Boniface, Aetius took refuge with them. Indeed, so dependent

had he become on their good will that when Attila became hostile, Aetius's position was irrevocably weakened.

Aetius exploited these barbarian connections for his own purposes and for the good of the empire, following directly the policies of Theodosius I, Stilicho, and Constantius. He seems to have had no more compunction than his predecessors about letting barbarians massacre barbarians on a grand scale, if indeed the massive slaughter of Burgundians by Huns in 437 was done with Aetius's approval.⁴

Aetius's sphere of activities was Gaul, and like Constantius, he attached great importance to settling various groups of barbarians where they might be of the greatest use and the least threat to Roman power.⁵ In 440, he settled a group of Alans on deserted land in the vicinity of Valence, and at some point he also brought another group of Alans to the *tractus Armoricanus*, Brittany or the region north of the Loire, which was very restive at this time.⁶ In 443, those Burgundians who had survived the massacre by the Huns in 437 were settled by Aetius as *foederati* in Savoy, or some part thereof, where they shared the land with the previous inhabitants.⁷ He variously fought or patronized the Franks, depending on the exigencies of the moment. Regarding the Visigoths, repeated exertions were necessary to oblige them to stay within the limits assigned to them by Constantius; but they also had an important role to play in the overall defence of Gaul.⁸

In Gaul and the adjoining areas, Aetius made the most of his power base. He made himself absolute master, disposing of peoples and making alliances as he saw fit, and acting more like a ruler than a general. There are various indications of the prestige he gained. In 432 the Spanish provincials sent an embassy to Aetius (rather than to Ravenna) asking him to make peace between them and the Sueves.⁹ Some time after Aetius's third consulate in 446 came the much discussed appeal from

the Britons requesting his help against the invasions of the Picts, Scots, and Anglo-Saxons (Gildas 20). The fruits of Aetius's protracted efforts in Gaul were reaped when, during Attila's invasion, he was able to call upon an assortment of allies to come to the assistance of Rome. Finally, after Aetius's death, envoys had to be sent to all the allied barbarians. All their agreements had been transacted with Aetius, and on his death they might consider them no longer binding; if so, a general uprising was to be feared.¹⁰

It is not so easy to deduce Aetius's attitude to barbarians outside his own immediate sphere of activity. Of the barbarian movements that took place in Aetius's active years, the one that had the most lasting effect on the Western Empire was the Vandal invasion of Africa. The Vandals, led by their king, Gaiseric, crossed from Spain to North Africa in 429; their advance was halted temporarily by a treaty in 435, but Gaiseric soon broke this and went on to capture Carthage and the rich proconsular province. A more lasting settlement was made in 442; Gaiseric observed its terms scrupulously until the middle of the next decade. He was probably restrained from aggression during these years by the betrothal of his son Huneric with Valentinian's elder daughter Eudocia.¹¹ This marriage might have eventually raised Huneric to the highest position to which a barbarian could aspire in the Western Empire, that of *generalissimo*, a prize coveted by more than one barbarian king in the fifth century. Gaiseric remained docile even when the West was reeling under the onslaught of Attila, but in 455, after Aetius and Valentinian III were dead, the Vandal king claimed that his private agreement with them had no further force, and suddenly and ferociously attacked Rome. Eudocia was carried off to Carthage and married to Huneric. Gaiseric must have been motivated, at least in part, by some sudden fear that, with Valentinian in his grave, the prize would slip from his son's grasp.¹² By 455 Eudocia was already sixteen or seventeen years

old,¹³ and Gaiseric might well have expected, several years prior to this, the solemnization of a marriage that had been arranged so long before.

The reason for this delay and its culmination in Gaiseric's decision to carry off the bride by force is a matter of speculation; it raises the question of Aetius's role in these events, and of his and Valentinian's attitude toward the Vandals. Scholars are generally agreed that Aetius was in favor of the two treaties with Gaiseric. It would have been fully in keeping with his policy and that of his predecessors to permit barbarians to occupy peacefully lands of which they were in *de facto* possession, on the usual condition that they be allies, or at least that they be given a stake in defence of the empire.¹⁴ Aetius was doubtless reluctant to leave his own power base in Gaul and embark on an expedition to Africa, where he would be separated from Italy by sea and exposed to possible intrigues on the part of Valentinian, and he would have been equally reluctant to send another general on such a major undertaking lest, if successful, he become a rival.¹⁵ In the last resort, Aetius would probably have preferred to see Gaiseric stay in Africa than to move him back into Spain, which was the only plausible alternative, because to attempt to confine him to the less desirable western part of North Africa would have required that he station a substantial army in Africa,¹⁶ a difficult, and, in Aetius's eyes, dangerous move.

One might, then, expect Aetius to have been strongly in favor of any ploy that would help to consolidate the peace with Gaiseric, and the engagement of Huneric and the imperial princess certainly succeeded, as nothing else had done, in restraining Gaiseric from further encroachments. Thus, in one view, Aetius "prevailed upon Valentinian to consent" to the betrothal in question.¹⁷ By this move, Aetius not merely deprived Gaiseric of any pretext for attacking Sicily, Sardinia, or Italy, but also shattered the alliance between Vandals and Goths. Huneric, with the prospect of an alliance with the imperial household,

quickly rid himself of his present wife, a daughter of the Visigothic king, Theoderic. She was accused of having plotted to poison Huneric, and was sent back to her father with her ears and nose mutilated.¹⁸ From Aetius's standpoint, this isolation of the Visigoths was particularly desirable. On the other hand, the marriage of Huneric with Valentinian's elder daughter would have raised a dangerous rival to Aetius, and however useful the betrothal may have been from some standpoints, Aetius cannot have welcomed it with unmixed feelings.

Lately, some writers have held that he was opposed to it from the very beginning,¹⁹ and that Valentinian and his mother conceived the idea to provide themselves with a counterbalance to Aetius. Submitting to the grip of a Vandal generalissimo can hardly have been more appealing than their existing situation with Aetius, however, and the idea of giving Eudocia in marriage to a family of fanatical Arians must have been repugnant to the highly orthodox court of Ravenna.²⁰ At the same time, from Aetius's point of view, the immediate advantages gained from settling the Vandal problem and ruining their alliance with the Visigoths probably more than offset the long-term danger. Eudocia was only four or five years old in 442 and it is highly improbable that Gaiseric would have jeopardized so desirable a marriage by demanding that it be solemnized before 450 or thereabouts, so Aetius, by choosing what may at that time have seemed the least unattractive option, had won a respite. He might have hoped, over the next few years, to devise some way of coping with Gaiseric: the Vandals were not numerous; a great wedge had been driven between them and the Visigoths; if Gaiseric died their power might collapse; a shift in the power situation might greatly strengthen Aetius's hand; and finally, something promised need not necessarily be given. The most reasonable assumption seems to be that the betrothal was equally attractive (or equally unattractive) to both Valentinian and Aetius, though for different reasons. Both Aetius and Valentinian faced a

terrible plight when the Vandals seized Carthage and the proconsular province; if something were not done to pacify Gaiseric, then generalissimo and Augustus together might see what remained of the West collapse in front of their eyes. When Merobaudes refers approvingly to the betrothal in Panegyric II (27-29), dating to 446,²¹ he expresses the official view of both Valentinian and Aetius. If Aetius had been totally opposed to it from the start, Merobaudes would surely not have mentioned it.

The passage of a few years (which brought only an increase in Hunnish power), and the approaching maturity of Eudocia must have filled both Valentinian and Aetius with misgivings. One cannot assume that the postponement of Eudocia's marriage had actually been forced by Aetius.²² There is no evidence for this, and it is not clear how Aetius could have delayed the marriage if Valentinian was determined it should be carried out, other than by taking some massive military action against both Valentinian and the Vandals. Valentinian's dealings with Gaiseric cannot have been motivated solely by his desire to rid himself of Aetius; while he certainly must have cordially detested his generalissimo, Valentinian was haunted by other and more vital threats than those posed by the oppressive power wielded by Aetius. In particular, Valentinian must have dreaded a reopening of Vandal hostilities from their new position of strength in Carthage at least as much as he feared anything that Aetius could do. Furthermore, even after the betrothal of Eudocia, Valentinian continued to adopt a hostile attitude toward the Vandals and refused to acquiesce in the idea that their occupation of Africa was permanent. In a law of 451 he refers to the "hostili vastatio" and "Wandalica vastatio" of Africa, he sympathizes with those who "lost their resources at the hands of the enemy," and he expresses the expectation that one day, "under the auspices of God, it shall come to pass that they return to Africa."²³

Therefore, while Aetius and Valentinian were probably in agreement over the initial engagement of Eudocia with Huneric, it

is also very probable that, as Eudocia reached a marriageable age, they were in tacit agreement, each for his own reason, that the marriage should be postponed. Valentinian must have felt that he was doomed to remain ever in the power of a generalissimo, if not Aetius, then Huneric, with Gaiseric looming behind him. In this frame of mind, and in the absence of a son of his own, Valentinian understandably welcomed the opportunity to betroth his younger daughter, Placidia, to a young commander named Majorian, thereby winning himself a bulwark against Huneric, a possible future replacement for Aetius, and, best of all, an heir who might put an end to the succession of western generalissimos and command armies of his own.

Aetius regarded his Augustus as a valuable figurehead,²⁴ and his healthy respect for an emperor who had good dynastic credentials was doubtless reinforced by the unhappy affair of Castinus and John. It is highly improbable that he would ever have aspired to the purple himself; the experiences of Constantius and John demonstrated the unwillingness of Theodosius II, Valentinian's colleague in Constantinople, to grant legitimacy to what he must have seen as mere upstarts, and Aetius could not base a claim, as Constantius had done, on marriage into the imperial family. Only under drastically changed circumstances, if, for instance, he could engineer the barbarian threat in such a way as to put himself in a strong position vis-à-vis the eastern as well as the western emperor, would he be able to make a plausible bid for the purple, (and even then he might have to contend with Theodosius's powerful barbarian general, Aspar, the nearest equivalent to a generalissimo in the Eastern Empire). There is no evidence that his ambitions (or even his inclinations) ever stretched as far as this; his interests were centered upon the West, and during the three decades of his ascendancy, the eastern and western parts of the empire left each other alone more than had ever been done in the past, and were, indeed, beginning to lose interest in each other. Aetius had no

eastern ambitions, and the eastern court felt no need to interfere in the West. Significantly, once Valentinian had been securely established upon the western throne, no usurpers appeared and no moves were made to overthrow him, a situation due in no small part to Aetius's undoubted loyalty and his energetic presence in Gaul, the breeding ground of usurpers in the recent past.

Aetius displayed the same concern as did Stilicho and Constantius to link himself by marriage with the imperial family. Valentinian had two daughters but no son. Some time around 450, as Eudocia approached marriageable age and there seemed no way to avoid giving her to Huneric, Valentinian selected the aristocrat Majorian as a future husband for his younger daughter, Placidia. This young man had already begun to distinguish himself as a commander, and his later activities proved him to have some talent.²⁵ If Valentinian died without a son, Majorian would thus be the obvious heir to the western throne, and being a potentially great general he might be expected to command the imperial armies as Theodosius I had once done. The move was directed not only against Aetius but against Huneric, Attila, and anyone else who might aspire to replace Aetius and win supreme command of western forces. Aetius responded to this move by dismissing Majorian from his command and obliging him to return to his country estates. He later forced Valentinian to swear an oath of friendship with him,²⁶ and to agree to the betrothal of Placidia with his son Gaudentius.²⁷ Like Stilicho, Aetius hoped to consolidate his position by becoming father of an emperor.

As a further method of strengthening his position, Aetius seems to have cultivated close relations with certain segments of the aristocracy. There are conflicting opinions on these relations, and the matter is further complicated by a couple of other circumstances. In the first place, Placidia and Valentinian also seem to have been cultivating sections of the aristocracy, presumably as a counterpoise to Aetius. Furthermore, the great

aristocrat, Petronius Maximus, had ambitions going far beyond those of the average member of his class; he aspired to the highest power, and had wished to replace Aetius before actually deciding to become emperor himself.²⁸ It may be surmised, therefore, that he was frequently playing his own game, and his actions cannot be taken as representative of any class or clique.

One modern view is that Aetius colluded with the aristocracy as a whole for the purpose of extorting privileges from the central government and thwarting attempts at tax reform, that Placidia and Valentinian were helpless in the face of this alliance, and that imperial power was thereby weakened.²⁹ A more plausible view is that Aetius's efforts at winning support among the aristocrats were confined largely to his major sphere of operations — Gaul.³⁰

The Roman government suffered chronic financial difficulties owing partly to its failure to levy a fair share of taxes from the wealthiest landowners of Italy, who, thanks to a corrupt and inefficient bureaucracy, enjoyed great privileges and tax exemptions. Efforts by various emperors to enforce improved laws after they were made were persistently frustrated. This situation was aggravated by attempts on the part of Placidia and Valentinian to win support among the Italian aristocrats, who consequently extorted further privileges and monopolized public office. Far from colluding with the aristocracy, Aetius seems to have been a proponent of tax reform, and likely aroused the opposition of the Italian aristocrats. It is no accident that any evidence for Aetius's interference in the details of state finances falls in the very period (450–54) in which some members of the Gallic aristocracy held high public offices.³¹ These Gallic aristocrats, who had supported various local usurpers over the years, would, in their frustration, select a new imperial candidate after the death of Aetius, namely his old lieutenant Avitus.

By the time that Attila was making his grand assault on the Western Empire, Aetius's power and prestige had already diminished

as a result of the hostility of the Huns and their unavailability to serve him either as allies of the empire or as a threat held over Valentinian's head. So long as Attila constituted a danger, Aetius organized military resistance to him, but starting with the climax of the Hunnish threat in 451–52, Aetius had to maneuver more and more desperately to maintain his position and, through a series of mishaps and errors of judgment, gradually lost his grip. In 451, drawing heavily on the various Germanic federates settled in Gaul, especially the Visigoths³² (whose king, Theoderic, had inclined to an independent and neutral role), Aetius succeeded in raising an army that was capable of checking Attila at the bloody but inconclusive battle at the *locus Mauriacus* (or Catalaunian Plain) in northeastern Gaul.³³ The evenly matched slaughter seems to have been in keeping with the traditional Roman policy of pitting barbarian against barbarian, and after the battle Aetius took careful steps to avoid a total rout of the Huns and a great victory for the Visigoths.

These manipulations are reflected in a far-fetched account in the chronicle of Fredegar (2. 53). According to this story, on the night after the battle, Aetius visited Attila, expressed disappointment that the latter had not succeeded in ridding Gaul of the Goths, and warned him that a substantial elite Gothic contingent, greatly superior to those whom Attila had just fought, was arriving that night, and that Attila would be well advised to withdraw. After receiving payment for this advice, Aetius visited the Visigoth Thorismund, who had just succeeded to the throne after his father Theoderic had perished in the battle, and for a similar payment advised him to return home at once to Aquitaine and forestall his brothers who were planning to deprive him of his crown. Aetius's advice to Thorismund is also borne out by Gregory of Tours and Jordanes.³⁴ Whether this advice was given in all sincerity and represents an effort by Aetius to win the friendship of Thorismund is not certain, but Thorismund afterward became hostile to the Romans. There are two other

plausible motives for Aetius's advice: he wanted to send a group of dangerous and volatile allies back to their homes, and he wanted to spare the Huns from total destruction. Fredegar's story of Aetius's advice to Attila may be an echo of some communication that passed between them after the battle, or it may simply reflect Aetius's old friendship with the Huns. He would have surely been reluctant to see their total destruction, especially by the Visigoths, and would have probably been as happy to make an alliance with them as with the Goths.

This concern with maintaining a delicate balance of barbarian forces reflects the degree of Rome's weakness at this time; she survived, as has often been remarked, by playing off one lot of barbarians against another. It was a characteristic of the period, fully accepted by Stilicho and Constantius; it was, indeed, the secret of their success. Aetius adds a further twist by his peculiarly delicate personal status, struggling—desperately, at this point—to preserve his position as generalissimo of the West. He had to make a good showing against the enemies of Rome; at the same time he had to maintain some kind of permanent barbarian threat in such a way that he would be indispensable in thwarting it, yet make sure that it would not get out of hand. This last requirement was where he slipped up most grievously in this impossible juggling feat, for while he was trying to keep all the other balls in the air, Attila turned and attacked Italy in 452, and the blame for this disaster was placed, at least by some people, squarely on Aetius's shoulders.³⁵

There are two conflicting traditions in the sources describing just what Aetius was doing (or failing to do) at this point. On the one hand, Prosper³⁶ reproaches him for having neglected to take measures against a possible Hunnish attack on Italy, specifically, to guard the Alpine passes, and goes on to ascribe Attila's eventual decision to retreat from Italy and make peace to the influence of a three-man embassy sent from Rome. On the other hand, Hydatius (154) mentions nothing of the foregoing,

but states that eastern auxiliaries were sent by Marcian and, under the command of Aetius, they inflicted some damage on the Huns; he also mentions that the Huns were hard-pressed by famine and sickness. In considering these reports, both from relatively good sources, the best solution is to assume, with Freeman, that “one annalist preserves part of the story and the other another.”³⁷

It is hard to imagine that Aetius would have neglected to take appropriate measures to prevent a Hunnish attack on Italy. Possibly, he underestimated the strength of Attila’s forces after the slaughter of the Catalaunian Plain, and since they had returned to Pannonia, Aetius did not anticipate that they would attack the very next year.³⁸ He might have been so convinced of the success of his diplomacy after the battle that he felt his old alliance with the Huns was as good as restored.³⁹ Also, it is just possible that during the winter of 451–52 Aetius himself, and all his reliable nonfederate troops, were fully occupied on some other task. The famine raging in Italy in 451 must have prevented him from raising as large a force there as he might have wished,⁴⁰ and he was probably just as reluctant to introduce an assorted host of Goths, Franks, Saxons, and Bretons into Italy as he was to see a Hunnish invasion; the results might not have been very different. Other speculations are more far-fetched, and ultimately fruitless in the absence of information. Had he made some secret agreement with Attila after the battle of the Catalaunian Plain that Attila later broke? Did he deliberately allow Attila to invade Italy, in a fit of pique against the intractable Italian aristocracy and in a supreme effort to place Valentinian totally in his own power? Or did he simply decide that Italy, at a pinch, would have to be abandoned in order that Gaul, his own power base, might be saved?⁴¹ These last-mentioned possibilities, or some combination of them, are not utterly preposterous when considered in the light of one of his proffered solutions, namely his suggestion that Valentinian abandon Italy and flee with him—presumably, to Gaul.⁴²

When one looks, however, at the Hydatius version of these events, it appears that Prosper's reproach of Aetius is unjustified, and that the generalissimo did everything he reasonably could to protect Italy.⁴³ O. Maenchen-Helfen remarks that the passes over the Julian Alps do not lend themselves to defence in the way that the other Alpine passes do, and that in not attempting to defend them, Aetius acted just as other generals had done before and after him in a similar situation.⁴⁴ When a force of auxiliaries arrived from Marcian, however, he attacked and inflicted some losses on the Huns.⁴⁵

At the same time, in the light of Prosper's version, and of Hydatius's own remarks that the Huns were pressed by famine and sickness,⁴⁶ one might very well question how great a part Aetius's actions played in Attila's withdrawal; it must be remembered here that for a man in Aetius's situation merely to fail to play a crucial role in the defence of Italy at this juncture was to see his position seriously undermined. On top of this, his proposal that Valentinian flee with him from Italy can hardly have endeared him to the Italian senators or the Church. Had Attila rejected the embassy's overtures and found the strength to pursue his invasion of Italy, Valentinian might not have felt the idea of flight so outrageous, but public knowledge of the proposal (and it may well have been leaked out, if it was not simply concocted, by Aetius's enemies at court) when it was no longer appropriate would have marred Aetius's prestige. This was not the end of Aetius's misfortunes. The Hun leader's death in 453 and the utter destruction of Hunnish power by a Germanic confederation in 454, together with the murder in 453 of Thorismund and the succession to the Visigothic throne of Theoderic II, who took a friendlier attitude toward Rome,⁴⁷ rendered Aetius positively superfluous. Valentinian had before him the precedent of Arbogast, not to mention Aetius's own behavior twenty years earlier, as examples of what happened when an emperor tried to dismiss an overweening general, and in 454 decided the

time was right to eliminate him with his own hand. Six months later, in the spring of 455, Valentinian was murdered by two Hunnish retainers of Aetius. In June, Gaiseric swooped down on Rome.

When considering the overall course of events in Attila's invasions, and the role played by Aetius, especially his careful balancing of forces after the battle on the Catalaunian Plain, one begins to wonder whether that battle was really necessary and was not in reality a piece of highly elaborate tightrope walking on Aetius's part. One might even ask the same question concerning the entire bout of hostilities with Attila. It is possible to take at face value Attila's claim that in marching against the Visigoths in Gaul he was acting "*tamquam custos Romanae amicitiae*,"⁴⁸ and there is a highly plausible theory that Attila merely wished to take Aetius's place as strong man in the West and enjoy the advantages of acceptance within the charmed circle of civilization.⁴⁹ His demand for the hand of Valentinian's sister Honoria in marriage, commonly regarded merely as a preposterous excuse for his invasions, especially when coupled with his requirement of half of the West as her dowry, may be a distorted reflection in hostile sources of his possibly uncouth way of indicating a desire to forge a strong alliance between Huns and Romans (or, at least, the Romans of the West, toward whom his attitude was quite different from that he adopted toward the East).⁵⁰ If Attila's ambitions lay along these lines, they would have naturally aroused the anxiety of Aetius, who might thus have been rendered superfluous, and would have prompted him to use every possible stratagem to frustrate Attila. The statement by John of Antioch (frg. 199.2) that Attila's first purpose was to overthrow Aetius ought perhaps to be taken quite literally as an indication of personal animosity.⁵¹ Thus, his sudden change of target from the Visigoths to Italy could be explained by his irritation at having been checked in Gaul; by the need for some quick and spectacular conquest in order to restore his prestige, especially among the Germanic peoples; and possibly

by a decision to try to outflank Aetius, by going straight to the heart of the Western Empire and forcing his own terms on Valentinian, in a way not altogether dissimilar to that employed by Aetius himself in 425 and 433.

Aetius's great concern, and a cornerstone of his life's policy, was to make himself indispensable to the western court. In this respect he did not act very differently from Stilicho or Constantius, except that he coped less successfully with the challenges. His grasp on the reins of power never appears as firm as that of his two predecessors; and although they also worked constantly to strengthen their positions, in Valentinian and his mother, Aetius had enemies who worked equally constantly to squeeze him out. On one occasion they succeeded, but he proved too much for them and came back stronger than ever. Later in his career, the growing hostility of Attila weakened Aetius, and when, later still, his services could no longer be used either to bring the Huns to the support of the empire or to defend the empire from them, his position was seriously undermined.

Some of the more preposterous intrigues ascribed to Aetius, the sort of tales with which some authorities like to embellish their writings, are clearly unfounded. The story of Aetius's advice to Attila after the battle is a simple example of the type. A more spectacular example is the story that Aetius had Attila murdered.⁵² More complicated is the Procopius version of the plot to ruin Boniface, in which the intrigue is ascribed to Aetius;⁵³ it should most probably be ascribed to Felix. It is true that Aetius had Felix murdered, but given the balancing game that Placidia was playing with these three generals in the absence of a real figure of authority in the West, it was to be expected that they should intrigue one against another, and presumably Aetius was merely striking first. He was a good deal less savage in his treatment of the young Majorian (in spite of the urgings of his wife, if we are to believe Sidonius), the threat posed to his position being proportionately less serious.

Can Aetius be characterized as cunning and ruthless? One must remember the circumstances of the age in which he tried to make a satisfying career. In the golden days of Rome's expansion a general could pursue a highly self-seeking and downright murderous career and yet win renown by doing great things for the commonwealth. If Aetius appears in an even less favorable light than Stilicho or Constantius, it is because he had nothing to mask his self-seeking except a not very gratifying rearguard action as the West slowly crumbled. By comparison with the even more cynical behavior of his successor, Ricimer, he looks almost like a Roman of the old school. So he appears in the next century to Procopius, who decides that he merits the title "last of the Romans."⁵⁴

Procopius also tells (*Vand.* 1.4.28) of someone who, after Aetius's murder, bluntly told Valentinian that he had cut off his right hand with his left. The chronicler Marcellinus (s.a. 454) refers to Aetius as the great strength of the Western Empire, and remarks that with him the West fell and was not able to rise again. Finally, Jordanes refers to Aetius as "reipublicae Romanae singulariter natus" (*Get.* 34). There are, of course, more adulatory descriptions of Aetius in authors like Merobaudes, Sidonius Apollinaris, or Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus,⁵⁵ but these closing quotations are indicative of a tradition that saw Aetius as the last bulwark of Western Rome. F.M. Clover rightly draws attention to a certain sameness among character sketches of Aetius,⁵⁶ but to a later author looking back on this age (and quite irrespective of Gallic or other sentiment in Aetius's favor), the great general's achievements could surely speak for themselves.

8 | *Ricimer the Emperor-Maker*

The successor of Stilicho, Constantius, and Aetius as generalissimo of the Western Empire was a full-blooded barbarian; in this, as in various aspects of his career and policy, Ricimer marks a significant stage in the evolution and transformation of this position. He was closely linked with no less than three Germanic royal families: the Sueves on his father's side, the Visigoths on his mother's (she was the daughter of their king Wallia), and the Burgundians by marriage (his sister married the Burgundian king Gundioc, and their son Gundobad was later to succeed to the throne). Ricimer's closest ties seem to have been with his mother's people, and later generations regarded him as a Visigoth.¹

Ricimer must have begun to distinguish himself as a soldier in the days of Aetius; his rapid promotions in the later 450s would otherwise be inexplicable. According to Sidonius, as a young man Ricimer was linked by close friendship with Majorian, and the implication is that they had been comrades-in-arms before Majorian's dismissal by Aetius.² Following Valentinian's assassination on 16 March 455, the empress Eudoxia had wished the throne to go

to Majorian, and the plan was averted only by the energetic action of the ambitious senator, Petronius Maximus. Earlier, he had tried to persuade Valentinian to make him Aetius's successor, and was almost certainly a party to, if not the instigator of, the conspiracy to murder the emperor. With Valentinian dead, Petronius Maximus promptly had himself raised to the purple. To further secure his position, he forced Eudoxia to marry him and married his son Palladius to one of her daughters.³ The reign of Maximus was brought to an end, in little more than two months, by the even more energetic action of Gaiseric, who sacked Rome in early June 455, and made off with Eudoxia and her daughters as hostages. In the brief panic preceding Gaiseric's arrival at Rome, Maximus lost his life in what was virtually a lynching and, likely, his son perished with him.

It is very probable, in the light of Sidonius's remarks and of later events, that already during this time Ricimer was backing Majorian for the throne and was scheming to make himself successor to Aetius.⁴ These plans would have been frustrated by the intervention of Maximus, and in the chaos that followed the Vandal sack of Rome, Ricimer and Majorian, for unknown reasons, apparently made no serious attempt to further their plans, and the field was left open for Theoderic, the Visigothic king, to urge his nominee Avitus onto the imperial throne.⁵ Theoderic seems to have toyed briefly with the possibility of making himself master of the West, with Avitus as his figure-head, but abandoned the idea when Ricimer seized power.⁶

Under the emperorship of Avitus, Ricimer continued to pursue his career. With the rank of comes in 456 he won a resounding victory over the Vandals at Agrigentum and followed this up by destroying their fleet off Corsica.⁷ It was most probably after this that Ricimer was promoted to the *magisterium militare*.⁸ He was, however, only the second *magister praesentalis*; the rank of *magister peditum* and *patricius* was held by

one Remistus, probably a Goth who had accompanied Avitus from Gaul.⁹

At this stage Ricimer and Majorian began to press forward seriously with plans to depose Avitus. Ricimer, after his great victory, was powerful and respected; Majorian had a strong following among those troops who had formerly been loyal to Aetius. Furthermore, Avitus seems not to have been recognized by Constantinople,¹⁰ and Ricimer and Majorian could use this fact to clothe their actions in some shreds of legitimacy. This was the first of several occasions on which Ricimer chose to remember the myth of imperial unity in order to make use of the eastern emperor. Finally, circumstances in Rome worked to the disadvantage of Avitus: the fact that he was of the Gallic aristocracy and appointed Gauls to high places won him instant disfavor in some circles; he was blamed for the famine that broke out in Rome; and he was further disliked for stripping the bronze from public buildings and selling it so that he could pay off his Visigothic troops.¹¹

The first action in the revolt of Ricimer and Majorian was the murder of the patricius and magister peditum Remistus, whom Avitus had designated to hold Ravenna. Avitus appointed Messianus in Remistus's place and prepared to face Ricimer and Majorian. The decisive battle took place at Placentia. The forces of Avitus were routed, Messianus was killed, and Avitus took refuge in the city, where he was hastily appointed bishop. Concerning his death shortly afterward, the sources are vague or contradictory; suffice it to say that it came very opportunely for Ricimer and Majorian.¹²

Ricimer became patrician on 28 February of the following year, 457. Unfortunately, the laconically worded chronicler's note withholds more information than it gives:

Ricimer mag. mil. patricius factus est pridie kl. Marcias et factus est Maorianus mag. mil. ipso die. (*Cons. Ital.*, s.a. 457)

In the absence of a western emperor, these appointments must have been made by Leo, who had succeeded to the throne of Constantinople in January.¹³ It has been proposed that on becoming patrician Ricimer gave up the *magisterium militare*.¹⁴ Such a move, far from being a promotion, would clearly have undermined his power and he would not have tolerated it. He must, at this point, have become *magister peditum*,¹⁵ thus acceding to the vacant role of *generalissimo*. Here, for the first time, was an attempt by an eastern emperor to administer the West through a *generalissimo* in the absence of a western Augustus. The experiment was short-lived, but highly significant of later developments. In addition, Ricimer, unlike his predecessors, was not the patrician of a particular western emperor to whom he owed his promotion and to whom he was specially bound. He received the rank from Leo, but having acquired it, he retained it through the reigns of several successive western emperors. In Ricimer's case, the rank of patrician took on an independent status.¹⁶ At the same time that Ricimer received the patriciate, Majorian was promoted to the rank of *magister militum*, presumably the second, or equestrian, *magisterium*.¹⁷ Ricimer wanted supreme power in the West, namely the combined patriciate and *magisterium pedestre*.

Under Ricimer's control, the West had gone through several months without a western Augustus, and under his supremacy it would experience even longer *interregna*. Ricimer, however, was acutely aware of the importance of conciliating both the East and the conservative elements of Rome, and this is probably why he felt a western emperor was needed. Ricimer's barbarian background excluded him from the throne; he had learned from his predecessors and had no aspirations in that direction. The obvious choice was Majorian.¹⁸ In his first novella, Majorian referred to Ricimer by the old title of "*parens patriciusque noster*."¹⁹ Majorian, or so Ricimer planned, would be a docile puppet on the throne, and other important positions in the military hierarchy would gradually be filled by followers of Ricimer and Majorian.

One more step remained in the now familiar pattern, the consulate. Majorian held the position in 458,²⁰ and Ricimer took it in 459. This was the last time that a western *magister militum* held the consulate. That Ricimer did not hold the office again in the remaining thirteen years of his life is, in the light of his predecessors' performances, rather surprising. Whatever contempt he may have felt for a highly traditionalistic dignity that did not contribute directly to his military power, the need, which every *generalissimo* felt, of cultivating the senatorial faction might have led him to embrace an office that would have raised his esteem.

Ricimer's neglect of the consular office could be linked with the one notable factor that made his situation different from that of his predecessors. Stilicho, Constantius, and Aetius all served under emperors who were members of the great Theodosian house, and, whatever the real power situation may have been, the prestige of that house was such that these three *generalissimos* attached considerable importance to establishing and strengthening their ties with it. While only one of them actually chose to become Augustus, the other two evidently aspired to be father of an emperor, duly attached to the Theodosian family. By the 460s, however, that family was, for Ricimer's purposes, extinct by reason of its connection with the Vandals through the marriage of Eudocia and Huneric. Ricimer's enmity with Gaiseric and, presumably, his fear of Huneric as a potential rival, kept him from any leanings toward the survivors of the Theodosian house until, in 472, he placed one of them, Olybrius, on the throne in a desperate effort to reach a rapport with Gaiseric. While Ricimer found himself unable to dispense permanently with a figurehead Augustus, he would, understandably, have had little inclination to link himself by any sort of literal parentela with someone whom he might, at any time, choose to depose and perhaps murder.

With Ricimer, the ultimate abolition of the western imperial throne was one step closer. As *generalissimo*, he would have preferred to rule the West as viceroy of the eastern emperor,

unencumbered by an emperor in Italy. For him, the mystique of the imperial family, so compelling in the careers of his predecessors, was dead. Perhaps for this reason, the second and third consulates, the traditional prerogative of members of the imperial family, seemed irrelevant to Ricimer. Later, Odovacar and Theoderic continued to nominate consuls for the West, but never held the position themselves. Ricimer likewise evidently felt it more becoming for the absolute ruler of the West to use the consulate as an honor to bestow on his followers and on Italian aristocrats than to occupy it himself. In the late 450s, it seems that Ricimer was still learning, still attempting to define his position.

He may well have felt that his alliance with his old comrade-in-arms Majorian was to be a long-lasting one. It soon became clear, however, that Majorian was not at all cut out to be a puppet, and was determined to play the role of emperor in all seriousness. Ricimer had to face the fact that Majorian was in no way his creature but was, indeed, his rival for the mastery of the West.²¹ There has been some discussion as to the correct implications of a sentence in Majorian's first novella addressed to the senate:

Erit apud nos cum parente patricioque nostro Ricimere rei militaris pervigil cura. Romani orbis statum, quem communibus excubiis et ab externo hoste et a domestica clade liberavimus, propitia divinitate servemus.

The importance of Ricimer is undeniable;²² he is mentioned along with the emperor, and Majorian does not attempt to confine him to purely military functions.²³ There is other evidence that even under Majorian's dispensation, Ricimer's responsibilities, like those of his predecessors, went well beyond the purely military.²⁴ The significance of Majorian's *Novella 1* is not that Ricimer is mentioned along with Majorian—Ricimer is,

after all, the *generalissimo*—but that Majorian is mentioned along with Ricimer in terms that indicate he has had and will continue to have an equal responsibility for military matters. These are not the utterances of a court poet congratulating an Honorius or a Valentinian for victories that the whole empire knows were won by his *generalissimo*. These words mean exactly what they say. Here is the novel, unaccustomed spectacle of a western emperor placing himself on the same level of military importance as his *generalissimo*.

As if this were not humiliating enough for the would-be successor of Stilicho, Constantius, and Aetius, Majorian proceeded to carry out a successful military operation in Gaul, making use of his second *magister militum*, Nepotian, and his *magister militum per Gallias*, Aegidius, while leaving Ricimer idle in Italy.²⁵ There is an elaborate but unfounded theory that Nepotian was really a creature of Ricimer, who had set him up as a counterbalance to Aegidius, that Majorian was obliged to use Nepotian in such a way that he would do the minimum of harm, and that Nepotian was somehow involved in Majorian's naval setback in Spain.²⁶ Nepotian's curious dismissal from office in the early 460s, carried out, apparently, through the agency of the Visigothic king Theoderic, would seem to indicate that he was no friend of Ricimer.²⁷ Majorian must have been able to appoint to various high positions men of entirely his own choice, some of whom were potential rivals to Ricimer.²⁸

It is sometimes assumed that Majorian's naval setback in Spain just prior to his projected expedition against the Vandals was in some way connected with his downfall,²⁹ but Ricimer must have decided long before that event that he would have to rid himself of his emperor, and was simply awaiting his chance. It came on 2 August 461 when Majorian, having dismissed his expensive barbarian troops, and accompanied only by his personal bodyguard, fell into Ricimer's hands in Liguria. Ricimer obliged him to abdicate, and five days later he was dead, killed, almost

certainly, on Ricimer's orders, though another version of events claimed that he died of dysentery; this was surely the propaganda of Ricimer, as was the story that he was put to death for collusion with Gaiseric.³⁰ This is a notable change from the days of Stilicho, Constantius, or Aetius: Ricimer, who had made an emperor, felt fully entitled to unmake him at will. Majorian, however, was much too dangerous to be left alive.

Some factions, notably those of Aegidius and Marcellinus, came out in open hostility against Ricimer and refused to recognize his new puppet, Libius Severus, but Ricimer was at least relieved of the necessity of feigning cooperation with someone of whom he must have been increasingly jealous. For more than three months he managed the West without an emperor. His eventual choice of the otherwise unknown Lucanian, Libius Severus, was probably dictated by a desire to please the Italian aristocracy, for Severus was elected by the senate on 19 November 461 but was not recognized at Constantinople.³¹ Once again, Ricimer might have been happy to rule the West permanently without an emperor, but the time for this development was not quite ripe, so he selected, at his leisure, a congenial emperor. The contrast with Majorian is significant: Severus was a military nonentity. Ricimer might still have to struggle against those who were openly his enemies and rivals, but with a subservient emperor, he would at least be master of Rome and Italy.

The break with the regime of Majorian is indicated in the tone of the title and opening of the first novella of Severus:

Abrogatis capitibus iniustis legis divi Maioriani A. ad locum. Illud tantum ex eadem lege retinentes, quod veterum legum commendat auctoritas. . . .³²

The new and unchallenged power of Ricimer was manifested in a variety of ways. His monogram **R̅E** appeared on the reverse

of certain coins of Severus,³³ and even if one accepts the view that these coins date to the interregnum between Severus and his successor Anthemius,³⁴ this was nevertheless a significant honor for the patrician, and a noteworthy precedent in that the practice was taken up later by Odovacar. A further indication of Ricimer's prestige is found on a bronze plaque in a Berlin museum, which bears on one side the inscription, "salvis dd. nn. et patricio Ricimere," and on the other, "Plotinus Eustathius v. c. urb. pr. fecit." The wording points to a period when Ricimer wielded an overwhelming power, most probably during the reign of Severus, and "dd. nn." would thus refer to the emperors Severus and Leo.³⁵ The abolition of the equality of civil and military status among the highest officials and its replacement by a *praerogativa partis armatae* should also be dated to this time.³⁶ Interference in a wide range of civil matters was normal for all the generalissimos, and to this practice Ricimer was no exception.³⁷ During the remaining years of his career, Ricimer's fortunes were to undergo certain fluctuations, but for the eleven years between the death of Majorian and the end of Ricimer's life, there was no doubt as to who was the real ruler of the West. Marcellinus Comes, in a striking anticipation of what was to take place under Odovacar, mentions the following event of the year 464:

Beorgor rex Halanorum a Ricimere rege occiditur.

Ricimer, in his eyes, is just another barbarian king.

Ricimer was not destined, however, to rule the West tranquilly with Libius Severus as his docile puppet. On 15 August 465³⁸ Severus died after a reign of somewhat less than four years. Cassiodorus alone mentions a rumor that Ricimer was responsible for his death;³⁹ two other sources, Paul the Deacon (*HR*, 15. 1) and, more notably, Sidonius Apollinaris (*Carm.* 2.317 f.) specifically mention that Severus died a natural death:

Auxerat Augustus naturae lege Severus
divorum numerum.

Whether this last observation was occasioned by Sidonius's reflection on the number of unnatural deaths at this time, or whether it was meant to quell the sort of rumors that later find mention in Cassiodorus, or whether it was a piece of tongue-in-cheek sarcasm by one who knew or suspected that Ricimer had murdered Severus but was blandly repeating the official propaganda,⁴⁰ are speculative questions. Uncertain also is Ricimer's motive in murdering someone who seems to have been, for his purposes, an ideal emperor.

One possibility is that there had been strained relations between Severus and Ricimer, and that Severus had conspired against his generalissimo or the latter had reason to fear that he might. The suggested reason for Severus's dissatisfaction and fear is the consulate in 464 (proposed by Constantinople but recognized by the West, presumably on instructions of Ricimer) of Olybrius, married to Placidia, and son-in-law of the last western emperor of the Theodosian house, Valentinian III, and thus a strong potential rival to Severus himself.⁴¹ Because of Olybrius's relationship to the Vandal royal family (Valentinian's other daughter, Eudocia, was married to Gaiseric's son Huneric), he was proposed by Gaiseric as a candidate for the western throne, and Severus may have had good reason to fear that Ricimer would eventually reach an accommodation with Gaiseric, as, indeed, he tried to do some years later.

Ricimer, although he had found his ideal docile emperor and made himself master of the West, was having problems concerning his relations with the East and with Gaiseric. He was still on hostile terms with the latter; Priscus (frg. 29) mentions one embassy sent to Carthage by Ricimer in 461 to dissuade Gaiseric from his repeated attacks on Sicily and Italy, but by 467 there was no sign of agreement between Ricimer and Carthage.⁴²

On the basis of the single embassy of 461, it is difficult to argue that Ricimer was negotiating with Gaiseric during Severus's lifetime.⁴³ Throughout these years the Vandal raids were an acute embarrassment to Ricimer because he was unable to stop them. Meanwhile, Leo came to terms with Gaiseric in 462, and Eudoxia and her younger daughter Placidia, taken hostage in 455, were permitted to go to Constantinople.⁴⁴ After this, Ricimer might reasonably have expected Leo to apply some pressure on Gaiseric to cease his raids, but to compound Ricimer's chagrin, Constantinople had never recognized Libius Severus as Augustus.⁴⁵

Severus's position was precarious at this stage, but he could not hope to gain by conspiring against Ricimer, without whom he had no chance of reigning. If he simply feared for his life, his best move would probably have been to abdicate and retire hastily to some bishopric. In any case, most scholars have seen in Severus an obstacle to Ricimer's reconciliation with Leo, and this provides a second possible motive for his murder. Severus's death made it possible for Ricimer, ever ready to make use of the East when it suited his purposes, to toss back to Leo the full responsibility for the protection of the West. Here again, however, there is a difficulty, for there passed another interregnum, this one of about a year and a half,⁴⁶ before Leo, stung, perhaps, by a Vandal attack on the Peloponnese,⁴⁷ decided that stern action would have to be taken against the Vandals, and at the same time selected a new western colleague with excellent credentials, Anthemius.

One interpretation of these events is that Leo made the removal of Severus a condition of his agreeing to help the West.⁴⁸ This is possible, though it is not clear why, if he really wanted to help the West, he should have objected so strongly to the harmless Severus, and why, after the removal of Severus, he waited a year and a half before making a move. Another view would interpret the interregnum to absolve Ricimer of the

charge of murder, on the grounds that he would not have been likely to kill off a harmless and useful emperor with no clear notion of how he would replace him; a scholar of the nineteenth century saw Ricimer as dallying for a year and a half, "balancing in his mind the respective advantages to be derived from an alliance with Carthage or with Constantinople," and eventually selecting Anthemius to be the wearer of the purple.⁴⁹ This view attributes to Ricimer considerably more freedom of movement than he must really have had; even if it could have been possible for him to satisfy the demands of Gaiseric at this stage while still retaining his own position of *generalissimo*, one cannot ascribe to him the prerogative of selecting Anthemius as his next puppet. When Ricimer decided to pass the burden of defence back to Constantinople, the most that he could do was wait for Leo to make the next move. It was Leo who selected Anthemius, for reasons entirely his own.⁵⁰

Though Ricimer would doubtless have preferred governing the West as *generalissimo* of Leo, without the complication of a western emperor, the time for that was still not ripe, and under the circumstances Anthemius was an excellent choice from everyone's point of view except Ricimer's.⁵¹ As son-in-law of Marcian, he was connected, however distantly, with the Theodosian house. His military career was distinguished; he might be counted upon to foster in the West the kind of resistance to the barbarian ascendancy that Leo himself was anxious to foster in the East. All these qualities could hardly fail to recommend him to the conservative faction in Italy.⁵² Ricimer must have viewed his new Augustus with mixed feelings; the very qualities that recommended him to everyone else rendered him unsuitable as a tool for Ricimer's use, and the *generalissimo* must have regarded him as the necessary price he would have to pay for the good will of Leo and for eastern protection against the depredations of Gaiseric. Even the marriage with Anthemius's daughter Alypia, which was included as part of the arrangement presumably in order to gratify Ricimer and

bind him by ties of parentela to the new emperor, could not have held the same attractions for him that such a marriage would have had for his predecessors. After having savored the experience of making and unmaking emperors at will, his status as son-in-law of the latest incumbent would not have compensated him for his subjection to an emperor with a will and a military reputation of his own.

One aspect of the new arrangement that must have been particularly irksome to Ricimer was that Anthemius brought with him as his comes and general Marcellinus, a former friend of Aetius, who had been a bitter enemy and rival of Ricimer for a number of years.⁵³ After the murder of Aetius he had carved out for himself in Dalmatia a realm that was quite independent of the Western Empire. There is some evidence that after or even just before the fall of Avitus, there may have been a movement among the young aristocrats of Gaul to raise him to the purple,⁵⁴ but, after the accession of Majorian, Marcellinus went over to his side and brought a fleet and a mainly Hunnish army to defend Sicily against the Vandals. Such energetic action by a capable and determined general, especially in support of Majorian, must have been alarming to Ricimer, and in 461 the generalissimo forced his rival to withdraw again to Dalmatia by using his superior wealth to buy off Marcellinus's Hunnish troops. In Dalmatia, Marcellinus continued to operate independently of the West but in close cooperation with Leo.⁵⁵ In 464 or 465 Marcellinus returned to Sicily to defend the island against the Vandals,⁵⁶ posing a direct threat to the personal power and prestige of Ricimer, who had already appealed to Leo to prevail upon Marcellinus not to undertake hostilities against him.⁵⁷

As Anthemius's supreme commander, Marcellinus was clearly intended to function as a counterweight to Ricimer. In the East, the established practice was for both *magistri militum praesentales* to be equal, rather than for one of them to hold precedence over the rest of the military establishment. From this

point of view, the move could be considered as an attempt to introduce eastern military practice in the West by an emperor who was determined to rule as such. Leo and Anthemius realized that the supremacy of one of the *magistri* made it excessively difficult for a western emperor to obtain and keep control of his military establishment. Marcellinus's rank under Anthemius is not precisely stated, but, since Ricimer was already *magister peditum*, it is a reasonable conjecture that Marcellinus was appointed *magister equitum*.

That Marcellinus also held the *patriciate* has been accepted by most scholars.⁵⁸ Recently, however, the evidence has been disputed, and the question raised of whether more than one military figure could hold the *patriciate* in the West at any one time, a question which also arises over the possible *patriciate* of Sigisvult during the supremacy of Aetius.⁵⁹ Even if the custom had grown up in the West that the *generalissimo* was the only military figure to receive the *patriciate*, such a rule was never formalized legally, and Anthemius might very well have considered it desirable to override a custom that fostered the ascendancy of someone other than the emperor. Furthermore, there is one striking difference between the cases of Marcellinus and Sigisvult. Aetius took violent measures to counter any direct threat to his power; he took no such measures against Sigisvult. If, indeed, the *patriciate* was conferred upon Sigisvult, it must have been done with Aetius's blessing.⁶⁰ In the case at hand, Marcellinus was murdered in 468, the year following Anthemius's accession, by officers in the army he was commanding in the great campaign against the Vandals.⁶¹ As with various other curiously timely sudden deaths, Ricimer's guilt cannot be certainly established, but under the circumstances it seems highly probable, and receives general scholarly acceptance.⁶² Ricimer and Marcellinus were bitter enemies, and the special preferment that the latter received from Anthemius, as reflected by his prominent role in the great anti-Vandal campaign of 468, would in itself have been sufficient

motive for Ricimer to murder him. Ricimer had probably been awaiting his opportunity for years. The very real threat that Ricimer felt from Marcellinus thus impelled him to violent counteraction of a sort that Aetius did not feel necessary in the case of Sigisvult, but the threat was posed as much by Marcellinus's character and military capabilities as by any official title he may have held.

Neither the marriage of Ricimer with Alypia nor the death of Marcellinus served to bring Anthemius and Ricimer closer together. Their mutual distrust, based upon ambitions that were clearly incompatible, built up to the point of open breach, but even before this stage was reached there are glimpses, behind the superficial exchange of insults,⁶³ of each man consciously working to undermine the other's influence.

Anthemius had all the credentials necessary to unite behind him the conservative and anti-barbarian elements of the West; Ricimer had as allies the various barbarian peoples with whom he had ties of blood or friendship, and from whom the generalissimos had traditionally found support. This control over the barbarian troops was of infinitely more value than any support the aristocrats were able or willing to supply to Anthemius. Anthemius's only hope for countering Ricimer's strength was to weaken this barbarian backing. From the moment of his accession, Anthemius tried to inspire a resurgence of imperial sentiment in Gaul and Spain in an effort to broaden the basis of his strength. He distributed favors to leading figures of Gaul, like Ecdicius and Sidonius Apollinaris,⁶⁴ and at the same time removed from office and banished, on grounds of treason, Arvandus, the creature of Ricimer and close friend of the Visigoths.⁶⁵ Anthemius strove for good relations not merely with the Roman inhabitants of these regions but also with the barbarian peoples; at the commencement of his reign, Visigoths, Sueves, Salian Franks, and Bretons showed varying degrees of cooperation,⁶⁶ and Ricimer can hardly have viewed

with approval this encroachment on what was, in a sense, his territory.

After the collapse of the great anti-Vandal expedition of 468, the situation vis-à-vis the barbarians changed perceptibly. The Visigoths resumed their expansionist policies, and, in 470, Gaiseric seemingly felt confident enough to resume his attacks on Italy.⁶⁷ Whether with the authorization of Anthemius or purely on his own initiative, Ricimer now took charge of the defence of Italy against the Vandals,⁶⁸ but it is quite probable that this resumption of the Vandal attacks was the crucial factor in determining him to reach some more satisfactory *modus vivendi* with Gaiseric. Ricimer also seems to have taken steps at this time to make sure that the position of *magister equitum* would be held by one of his own partisans. The only notice of anyone holding the second *magisterium* after the death of Marcellinus indicates that in 471 it was occupied by one Flavius Theodovius Valila.⁶⁹ He was a barbarian, and, as has recently been argued, there is a distinct possibility that he was a Visigoth, a descendant of Vallia, and thus a relative of Ricimer.⁷⁰ It is quite likely that his appointment was made directly after the murder of Marcellinus.

At the same time, Ricimer may have been making much more direct plans to rid himself of Anthemius. In 470 a plot was discovered to confer the purple on a certain Romanus, who was *magister officiorum* and a partisan of Ricimer; Anthemius chose to ascribe his recent poor health to magic spells cast by his enemies, and on this pretext he executed Romanus and a number of others.⁷¹ For Ricimer, this was the last straw. He left Rome and marched north with 6,000 troops to Milan;⁷² here, where he might be closer to the Visigoths and Burgundians, he made his headquarters. Since Anthemius still commanded a force of some size, Ricimer agreed to a reconciliation with him, carried out through the good offices of Epiphanius, bishop of Ticinum, in March 471.⁷³ In the only available account of this affair, Ennodius makes it clear that Ricimer was the real ruler of the West:

Ricimer, qui tunc secundis ab Anthemio principe
habenis rempublicam gubernabat. . . . (*Vit. Epiph.* 51)

In relating the efforts of the Ligurian aristocracy to reconcile the two men when their quarrel broke out anew, Ennodius treats Ricimer to the title of “princeps”: “flexis genibus soloque prostrati pacem orabant principum” (*ibid.* 53). This truce could not have been expected to last. Ricimer was searching for the best method to rid himself of Anthemius, and his solution was to raise Gaiseric’s candidate, Olybrius, to the purple. The move was a masterly one, and the time well chosen, for Anthemius was in a weakened position. The Visigoths had just crushed the army of the Breton king, Riothamus, who was on friendly terms with Anthemius, and they followed this up in 471 by defeating and killing Anthemius’s son Anthemiolus in southern Gaul.⁷⁴ Leo, involved in a struggle with the followers of Aspar, whom he had just murdered,⁷⁵ was not in a position to oppose Olybrius. This would have probably launched Ricimer and Gaiseric into a combined opposition against any eastern expedition. At the same time, Gaiseric’s renewed attacks on Italy after the failure of the great expedition of 468 made it clear to Ricimer that if he wanted to hold Italy in security, he would have to find some way to halt the Vandal hostilities. The elevation of Olybrius was intended, at least in part, to appease Gaiseric, and, at the same time, cost Ricimer nothing. Ever since the marriage of Olybrius with Placidia, the sister-in-law of Gaiseric’s son Huneric, Gaiseric had been pressing Olybrius as his candidate for the western throne; if this wish were fulfilled, it was improbable that Gaiseric would continue to ravage the coast of Italy.⁷⁶ The evidence is not strong enough to warrant speaking of any formal agreement between *generalissimo* and Vandal king,⁷⁷ but, given the strength of the Vandal position and Ricimer’s overall policies, it was to be expected that sooner or later he would move toward some sort of accommodation with them. Finally, the choice of Olybrius was an

excellent one in that he made a very plausible rival to Anthemius in Italy. He was of the noble Roman family of the Anicii, a senator, consul, and patrician, and as husband of Valentinian's daughter, Placidia, he could be regarded as a representative of the old Theodosian family with dynastic claims to the throne;⁷⁸ he could also be expected to win the favor of the Church, which had always looked askance at Anthemius.⁷⁹ After Olybrius's elevation (in the spring of 472) Anthemius could no longer count on the aid of those classes in Italy who had formerly been his supporters.

There is some doubt as to the relative importance of the roles played by Ricimer and Leo in bringing Olybrius from Constantinople to Italy (for there is no evidence that Olybrius himself took any initiative in seeking the purple). Several sources concur that he was sent to the West by Leo,⁸⁰ and this has given rise to some controversy about Leo's purpose. That Olybrius was sent by Leo on an embassy to reconcile Anthemius and Ricimer, and also to conciliate Gaiseric with Leo, is the most credible information; a more circumstantial account about the interception by Ricimer of a letter from Leo with secret instructions to Anthemius to kill both Ricimer and Olybrius, given only by Malalas, is open to suspicion.⁸¹ It must be admitted, however, that Leo had some reason to fear and mistrust Olybrius, whose claim to the purple on dynastic grounds was, like that of Anthemius, stronger than the claim of Leo himself; Olybrius could furthermore count on the support of Gaiseric. Leo must have welcomed an opportunity to get Olybrius away from Constantinople, just as he had previously done with Anthemius.⁸²

On the question of whether he actually tried to have him murdered, as Malalas says, one might judiciously agree with Ernest Stein's "*on ne peut décider.*"⁸³ Even if one chooses to reject that story, however, Leo might have anticipated, and perhaps even planned, that Olybrius should become embroiled in a conflict with Anthemius in which one or other, and possibly also Ricimer, would be destroyed. That Leo never specifically

intended Olybrius to become western emperor, and probably never recognized him as such, can be persuasively argued;⁸⁴ this does not necessarily imply, however, that Leo had no inkling that Ricimer was capable of instigating such a move, or that he was particularly saddened at the news that Anthemius had been replaced by Olybrius. Leo, absorbed in his own eastern problems, may simply have been indifferent as to which of the two men ruled the West, so long as both were removed from Constantinople. Indeed, Gaiseric's good disposition toward Olybrius would have been, in Leo's eyes, a point in favor of the latter's presence on the western throne. Leo must have been glad to be spared the expense of an expedition to the West.

As for Olybrius, nothing is known about his sentiments toward the Vandals, or barbarians in general, and one should not assume that if Olybrius were emperor, Gaiseric would enjoy a high degree of influence in the affairs of the West.⁸⁵ Olybrius's relationship with Gaiseric rested on the fact that his wife's sister, Eudocia, was married to Huneric; Eudocia had never reconciled herself to this marriage, as demonstrated by her flight from Carthage in 472, and there is no evidence that either the Roman aristocrat Olybrius or his wife Placidia, a princess of the Theodosian line, had any more enthusiasm than did Eudocia for their connection with the royal Vandal family. That Gaiseric had always made much of the relationship is understandable, and that he would refrain from hostile action if Olybrius were on the western throne was a reasonable expectation, but that his enthusiasm for his relationship with the Theodosian house was reciprocated by Olybrius, except insofar as it might be useful in keeping the Vandals at a distance, is an unwarranted assumption. As for the prospect of placing the West under Gaiseric's virtual control, this would hardly have appealed to Ricimer any more than to Leo, but, in fact, the elevation of Olybrius would give Gaiseric no more power over the West than he already had, unless Olybrius chose to collaborate with him. Any significant degree of collaboration between the two

was improbable, and this is proven by Ricimer's choice of Olybrius as his next emperor. Ricimer, by now, had had sufficient experience of emperors not to replace Anthemius by an even more dangerous one.

The final struggle with Anthemius was soon over. Ricimer laid siege to Rome, and though Anthemius, with those elements in the city still loyal to him, managed to hold out for five months, the defeat of a relief army led by one Bilimer,⁸⁶ followed by their defection to Ricimer's side, brought the matter to a close. Anthemius and his followers abandoned the fight, and on 11 July 472 the emperor, disguised as a beggar, was discovered and slain.⁸⁷ One is tempted to speculate on whether, had they both lived to see the end of that year, Ricimer would have found Olybrius a more satisfactory emperor than his four predecessors, who, all were found wanting. Ricimer, however, died of a hemorrhage six weeks later, on 18 August, and Olybrius died of dropsy some time in October or November.⁸⁸

In any analysis of the guiding principles of Ricimer's career, the similarities with and the differences from the careers of his predecessors are equally conspicuous. Ricimer, in short, was carrying on their work, but in rapidly changing circumstances. As for defining his position, he was content with the now familiar titulature of his predecessors. In the matter of honors and titles, one is struck only by his apparent disinterest in the conventional prestige attaching to the consulate, and by the *rex* of Marcellinus Comes (s.a. 464), a splendid piece of anticipation that almost deserves to be called a slip of the tongue.

A primary element in Ricimer's policy, just as in that of his predecessors, was friendship with and use of barbarians. With only one barbarian nation, the Vandals, was he on more or less consistently hostile terms. Sidonius (*Carm.* 2.357-65) gives two reasons for the mortal enmity between Ricimer and Gaiseric: Gaiseric, who was a bastard, was jealous of Ricimer who had royal blood on both sides of his family; Goths and Vandals were longstanding

military enemies. Of these reasons, only the second need be taken seriously,⁸⁹ and it tells only a small part of the story, for traditional enmities have never prevented ambitious individuals from making profitable alliances when the occasion seemed appropriate. The impulse for this enmity seems to have come mainly from Gaiseric, whose persistent championing of Olybrius as candidate for the western throne, whose claims to have all the former property of Valentinian III and Aetius given up to him, and whose pretensions to interfere in the Western Empire, all on the strength of his relationship to the Theodosian house, could not but make him regard Ricimer as an irritating obstacle to his ambitions.⁹⁰ There was nothing, however, in Ricimer's fundamental policies that would have prevented the establishment of an accord between the Western Empire and the Vandals, highly advantageous to the latter, had Gaiseric only been willing to cooperate with him. Ricimer sent a fruitless embassy in 461 to urge Gaiseric to respect his former agreements with the West, and his choice of Olybrius as emperor must have been motivated in considerable part by a desire to conciliate Gaiseric. Had Ricimer not died when he did, this latter move might well have laid the foundation for the sort of accord that he was so eager to establish with other barbarian nations, but there is no evidence that in the remaining months of Ricimer's life Gaiseric ever showed any sign of personal amity toward him.

In dealing with the other barbarian peoples, and most conspicuously the Visigoths and Burgundians, Ricimer was able to follow to the full his predecessors' policy of peacefully settling such peoples within the empire, and of making use of them for its purposes and his self-interest; indeed he went further, and consented to the virtual carving up of Gaul between these two peoples.⁹¹ When Aegidius, the *magister militum per Gallias* and loyal supporter of Majorian, refused to recognize the regime of Libius Severus, Ricimer had him replaced by his own supporter Agripinus.⁹² Under the reign of Majorian, this man had been found guilty of treason, on a charge brought by Aegidius, and had been

sentenced to death; his life had been spared, probably by the intervention of Ricimer, who, after Majorian's death, released him and used him for his own purposes in Gaul. Agrippinus now carried on hostilities against Aegidius with the help of the Visigoths, to the great advantage of the latter, for in 462 he turned over to them the city of Narbonne and thus gave them their long-desired opening to the Mediterranean.⁹³ At this point there was the curious spectacle of the Visigoths fighting, as federates of the Roman government, and with its full support, against the traditionalist Aegidius, who, with Frankish help,⁹⁴ was molding a virtually independent state in northern Gaul. Aegidius's claim to legitimacy at this stage would have rested on his direct allegiance to Constantinople and his refusal to recognize the "usurper" Severus. This threat to Ricimer's power was abruptly cut short by the very timely death of Aegidius in 465, "*alii dicunt insidiis, alii veneno deceptus*,"⁹⁵ following which the Visigoths were able to recapture the lands he had taken from them. If the Visigoths, under their new king, Euric (who murdered his brother Theodoric II in 466 and usurped his throne), adopted a much more truculent attitude toward both Ricimer and the empire, their continued expansion from this point on was nonetheless due to the favor Ricimer had shown them.⁹⁶

If there was some coolness between Ricimer and the Visigoths after the accession of Euric, the relations between Ricimer and the Burgundians were always extremely close. The basis for this relationship was the fact that the Burgundian king Gundioc had married Ricimer's sister, and Ricimer had him made *magister militum per Gallias* in succession to Agrippinus some time in 462 or 463.⁹⁷ The significance of this move is enormous, for the high military command in Gaul and an assortment of civil responsibilities that went with it were now being formally turned over to the Burgundian royal family, with whom they remained from this point on. The next *magister militum per Gallias* was Gundioc's son (and hence Ricimer's nephew) Gundobad.⁹⁸ Ricimer's decision to have the honor conferred on him and not on

Chilperic, who was Gundioc's brother and immediate successor in the Burgundian kingship, seems to have been prompted by the closer relationship that bound Gundobad to him, and Gundobad's greater dependence on him, because he did not possess troops of his own. Gundobad was later summoned by Ricimer to help him in his final struggle with Anthemius (indeed John of Antioch, frg. 209, credits him with having discovered and slain the disguised Anthemius), and after Ricimer's death he was appointed his successor by Olybrius.

Another fundamental policy Ricimer adopted from his predecessors was that of cultivating the good will of the senate and the Italian aristocracy. Indeed, he did this much more thoroughly than did Aetius, for Aetius's power base had been Gaul and the Gallic nobility, whereas Ricimer's power base was Italy, from which he seldom moved, and in his dealings with other areas of the West he acted as if they were virtually separate countries, which, indeed, they were soon to become.⁹⁹ Although he would doubtless have preferred to govern Italy without a western emperor, his choice of candidates for the purple indicates an awareness of the importance of conciliating the Italian nobility. In deposing Avitus he was certainly able to count on the wholehearted support of the Italian nobles, who regarded the ascendancy of their Gallic rivals as a kind of usurpation,¹⁰⁰ and Majorian's deposition probably also met with the approval of various elements in the Italian nobility whom in one way or another he had antagonized.¹⁰¹ Libius Severus was clearly a sop to the Italian aristocracy, and one of the factors strongly favoring the choice of Olybrius was his acceptability to the same group. Anthemius was sent by Leo theoretically on request of the Roman senate,¹⁰² though Ricimer and Leo must have negotiated the details in advance. At the same time prosopographical investigations show that one must not be overly simplistic in assigning nobles to factions; some Italian nobles may have hated Ricimer out of pure anti-barbarian sentiment, but many more were simply playing their own individual game.¹⁰³

Regarding his relations with the East, Ricimer used Marcian and Leo exactly as it suited him, adopting a very independent stance (as in the elevation of Severus and Olybrius) when he felt confident enough to do so, but conveniently remembering the nominal overlordship of the eastern emperor when he needed someone on whom to thrust the burden of defence. His ideal would have been to dispense with a western emperor and rule the West himself as patrician of the emperor of Constantinople; he experimented with this system during the three interregna that occurred in the West during his supremacy (456–57, 461, and 465–67), though each time he found it necessary, for one reason or another, to accommodate himself to a new emperor. These periods without a western emperor are highly significant, for they point the way toward the reign of Odovacar, which was to follow very shortly. In his dealings with emperors, both eastern and western, Ricimer must also have had always clearly before his mind the fates of his predecessors, Stilicho and Aetius, with whose tradition he doubtless identified strongly; this should be borne in mind when one considers the murders for which he is notorious.

Ricimer, however, while building on the experience of his predecessors, went much further than they did, and this may be partly due to the fact that he was the first of the western generalissimos since Arbogast to be a full-blooded barbarian. It would be both unjust and unhistorical, however, to regard him simply as a traitor to the empire¹⁰⁴ and to reproach him with conniving at the carving up of the West into a series of barbarian kingdoms, although he probably did more than any other individual to bring about just that state of affairs. Rather, he had a conception of the empire that differed radically from that of the traditionalists, a conception which unconsciously anticipated the imperial idea of the Middle Ages. He evidently thought of the empire as something very lofty and very remote, a kind of symbol of civilization with which all reasonable men would naturally want to associate themselves, but which, on the concrete and day-to-day

level, should not be allowed to interfere with the political separateness of its component nations. Thus the view of Vassili, who sees Ricimer as the great progressive of his age, working toward a new society, is probably more historically sound than the harshly critical view that pervades Seeck's treatment of him and represents a tradition going back to Gibbon. The titles chosen by both Gibbon and Seeck for their monumental works betray basic presuppositions, which more or less preclude the possibility of seeing the world through Ricimer's eyes. It is as unreasonable to expect Ricimer to have enthused over the traditional forms of the Roman Empire as it would be to expect an African or Indian of the present day to strive to uphold the nineteenth-century British Empire; what the Commonwealth of the present day means to its members may serve to give some notion, however remote, of how Ricimer felt about the empire.

9 | *From Generalissimo to King*

When Ricimer died in August 472, his latest puppet emperor, Olybrius, who had been raised to the throne only the previous month, designated Gundobad as successor to the deceased generalissimo by appointing him patrician and *magister militum praesentalis*.¹ Although there is no evidence that the position was actually bequeathed to Gundobad by Ricimer,² the latter evidently regarded the Burgundian prince, his nephew, as his right-hand man in the final struggle against Anthemius, and it seems not unreasonable to suppose that Ricimer might have designated Gundobad as his successor. Malalas 14 says that Gundobad had been *magister militum per Gallias*, but that early in 472 Ricimer recalled him to Italy; this might possibly be seen as a promotion to the position of second *magister praesentalis* (indeed some scholars have supposed that he already held that rank).³ That John of Antioch (frg. 209) credits him with having discovered and slain the defeated and disguised Anthemius indicates that he was playing a prominent part in the struggles of the time. The nature of the transferral of power from the one barbarian to the other is well summed up by Hodgkin:

It is conjectured with much probability that the barbarian element in the Roman army, which knew something of its strength, and was suspicious of any but a barbarian leader, transferred its fealty, or its attachment, or its obedience (it is difficult to find a word to express the nature of the tie which bound these troops to their leader) from Ricimer to his nephew, and that this transference brought with it, almost as a matter of course, his elevation to the rank of Patrician and “Father of the Emperor.”⁴

Olybrius himself died a couple of months later, in late October or early November,⁵ and Gundobad, just in the manner of Ricimer, was in no haste to select another emperor. There passed yet another interregnum, during which the empire was, in theory, ruled by one man, the eastern emperor, Leo. Then on 5 March 473, Gundobad bestowed the purple on his comes domesticorum, Glycerius.⁶ This choice was not approved by Leo, who selected instead as his colleague Julius Nepos, the husband of the empress Verina’s niece, and nephew and successor of Marcellinus as military governor of Dalmatia. On Nepos’s arrival in Italy, Glycerius was deposed, made a bishop, and sent off in this capacity to Salona.⁷ The circumstances surrounding this speedy overthrow are obscure and, at first sight, puzzling. Although the force that Nepos presumably brought with him by sea could not have been huge, Gundobad apparently did not make any move to resist him, and disappeared entirely from the Italian scene. Had he chosen to fight, he could surely have put up a very strong resistance, but it would seem that he accepted Leo’s right to reject Glycerius and nominate a colleague of his own choice, and that he did not wish to oppose the forces of legitimacy. It seems likely, moreover, that the elevation of Glycerius had not met with the approval of the senate or of the Gallo-Romans.⁸ To put up armed opposition to a nominee of the East and thereby incur, as would surely have been the case, the hostility of the senatorial class, would have been totally against the policy of any generalissimo.⁹ It is significant that in later years, as Burgundian king, Gundobad enjoyed excellent

relations with the East (he was now a *foederatus* of the empire) and continued to wear the title of patrician, though in the eastern, rather than the western, sense of the term.¹⁰ Gundobad was unique among the *generalissimos* in that his brief spell of glory as *de facto* supreme ruler of the West was not ended by his death. There are two quite distinct phases in his career, the Italian and the Burgundian;¹¹ during the former he was not acting in his capacity as Burgundian prince, but was simply furthering his own interests as successor of Ricimer. There is strong reason, however, for believing that he abandoned this career in order that later, as Burgundian king, he might maintain the warm relations that his people now enjoyed with the empire.

After his uncle Marcellinus's death in 468, Julius Nepos apparently inherited his authority in Dalmatia.¹² Whether Leo or Anthemius appointed him to this position, it was clearly done to provide a counterweight to Ricimer. Likewise, when Leo selected him to oppose Gundobad and Glycerius, it was a stern move against the pretensions of Ricimer's successor and the pro-barbarian faction in Italy. Nepos was not proclaimed emperor until June 474, after his arrival in Italy, and it has even been suggested that Leo's original intention was that he should replace Gundobad and rule the West as Leo's viceroy.¹³ This loses sight of the fact that the eastern emperors of the fifth century consistently favored the idea of having a western colleague who could be saddled with the ultimate responsibility of coping with the declining fortunes of the West. The evolution of the position of *generalissimo* into the viceroyalty of Odovacar was in no way fostered by the East. Indeed, there did not exist in the East a military patriciate such as that which evolved in the West. When Leo conferred the patrician rank on Nepos, it seems best to assume that this was a stage in the adoption of Nepos into the imperial family, which was completed by his marriage to Leo's niece, and that Leo's purpose was to pave the way for Nepos's eventual elevation to the throne.¹⁴ If Leo refrained from conferring the purple on Nepos before the expedition to Italy, it

was simply that he preferred to await its successful outcome; if Nepos could win Italy, he would be rewarded with the throne.

Leo, then, like his predecessors on the eastern throne, was prepared to back a western colleague of proven competence; like them he was unwilling to accept (perhaps unequipped to understand) the reality of circumstances in the West. It would be unhistorical to view the evolution of the western generalissimo as the result either of chance or of a series of conspiracies. Circumstances in the West demanded the existence of a supreme military commander who had a long record of intimate contact with barbarian troops; by the 470s, this virtually meant that he should be a barbarian. If a barbarian was unacceptable on the imperial throne (and, from the time of Constantius III, the throne was becoming less attractive to the few Romans who were eligible as generalissimos), then there had to be a generalissimo to function as a middle-man between the emperor—the impotent figurehead—and the barbarian troops, who represented real power. One is tempted, at first view, to wonder why the eastern emperors, in addition to fostering western colleagues, did not occasionally try to cultivate some well-disposed candidate for the post of generalissimo. Had Leo attempted this, perhaps the western throne might have been saved.

The reality of the situation, however, was that by Leo's time the eastern emperor was much too isolated from the western armies to play any role in the selection (perhaps, by this time, one should say emergence) of the generalissimo. Furthermore, the eastern emperor, within his own realm, still wielded real power; his western colleague, in an area where real power resided with barbarian troops, did not. The only western ruler who, at this time, could hope to wield real power would be the barbarian commander of those troops. Nepos did not command their allegiance,¹⁵ but at the same time was clearly too strong a personality and too competent a general in his own right to tolerate the usurpation of real power by a barbarian generalissimo. Leo had chosen Nepos intending him to rule the West in the way that he himself ruled the East, and the choice would have been an excellent one if

the West had been amenable to the same sort of government as still existed in the East. Under the circumstances Nepos could enjoy neither real nor nominal supremacy in the West because Leo had chosen neither a barbarian nor a nonentity.

Nepos's first choice as his patrician and *magister militum* was Ecdicius, the son of Avitus, and an Arvernian Gaul of strong anti-barbarian sentiment.¹⁶ Some years before, Anthemius had promised him the patriciate, evidently destining him as a replacement for Ricimer.¹⁷ This aspect of Ecdicius's background must have appealed to Nepos, who was doubtless also eager to conciliate the Gallo-Roman aristocracy.¹⁸ As Ecdicius, at the time of this appointment, was deeply involved in hostilities with Euric, king of the Visigoths, it would seem that Nepos originally planned a strong military effort in this direction, possibly as a follow-up to the victorious destruction of a Visigothic raiding force led by Vincentius in 473.¹⁹ He soon had to recognize, however, that Rome did not have the strength for such an enterprise, and that the Auvergne would have to be ceded to Euric. Ecdicius was recalled from his post;²⁰ evidently the fierce resentment felt by the Arvernians against the cession of their country, and possibly also the general personal sentiments of Ecdicius, rendered him unsuitable as a commander of barbarian troops. Ecdicius might have been tempted to follow in his father's footsteps and make a bid for the purple had he not been removed from his powerful military position.²¹ Although he held the patriciate and the *magisterium militare*, the two "badges" of generalissimo, he evidently was not cut out for the role of successor to Ricimer and Gundobad as power behind the throne, probably being unable to accept the changed circumstances of the West.

His successor, Orestes,²² appointed in 475, was much better qualified to be a commander of barbarian troops. He had spent some time at the court of the Huns, where he had been secretary to Attila, and from there had been sent on several diplomatic missions to Constantinople.²³ He was, nevertheless, a Roman of Illyrian or Pannonian extraction, son of a certain Tatulus and son-in-law of the comes Romulus, who had been an associate of Aetius

and his envoy to the Hunnish court.²⁴ After the fall of the Hunnish empire, Orestes had returned to the Western Roman Empire. One is struck by a certain similarity with the background of Aetius, and it seems, at first sight, as if Orestes was the very man to save the destinies of the Western Empire: here was a Roman citizen of good provincial stock, who could, at the same time, command the allegiance of the barbarian troops in a way that neither Nepos nor Ecdicius was able to do.²⁵

The very qualities, however, that recommended Orestes to Nepos as a more suitable commander-in-chief than Ecdicius made him a more dangerous person. Before many months had passed, after setting out from Rome on an expedition against an enemy,²⁶ he stopped at Ravenna and raised the standard of revolt against Nepos. After having seized power (Nepos, realizing his impotence, fled back to Dalmatia on 28 August 475), Orestes did not take the purple for himself, but, after a two-month interregnum, conferred it on his young son, Romulus.²⁷ Orestes, in his astute awareness of exactly where the real power lay, was directly in the line of the great generalissimos who were his predecessors, and, indeed, the fact that he, though a Roman, declined to ascend the imperial throne himself casts doubt on the theory that his barbarian counterparts refrained from a similar move merely because they were barbarian.²⁸ The absence of any imperial dynasty made it possible for Orestes to do in one swift coup what Stilicho and Aetius had schemed laboriously and fruitlessly to achieve, namely to place his young son on the throne while retaining for himself the real control over the situation.²⁹ With his unique combination of qualities, he was doubtless able to attract the support of various elements in Italy who were dissatisfied equally with domination by a barbarian generalissimo and domination by an emperor imposed by the East. There is no need to see in Orestes' coup an act motivated by various idealistic considerations but devoid of any motives of personal aggrandizement; he probably had exactly the same combination of self-interest and desire to benefit the West that was displayed by Aetius or any of his other predecessors.³⁰

In terms of policy, the scanty evidence from Orestes' very short period of supremacy seems to indicate that, in the manner of his prececesors, he was anxious to live at peace with the barbarian nations. His initial appointment by Nepos proves that he was more likely than the bellicose Ecdicius to go along with a conciliatory policy toward the Visigoths. Furthermore, in 476 he concluded a treaty with Gaiseric,³¹ and it is not necessary to assume that this was done merely in order to secure his position against Constantinople, where he (or, rather, his son) had failed to find recognition.³² Orestes would have made every endeavor to conciliate the senatorial class in Italy; his refusal to countenance the distribution of Italian lands among the Germanic troops speaks eloquently for his attachment to Italian aristocratic tradition. Furthermore, the new regime seems to have found recognition in Italy and southern Gaul; all the known coins of Romulus were struck in Rome, Ravenna, and Arles.

Times, however, had changed, and the very qualities that seemed to make of Orestes the one man who could save the West proved to be an actual hindrance. The situation in Italy had reached a point where the only person who could represent the real interest of the barbarian troops and hope to win their allegiance had to be able to identify wholly with their desires and aspirations: the person in power needed, in fact, to be a barbarian. The conflict between the interests of these troops, whose presence was essential to defend the shrunken remnants of the Western Empire against the encroachments of the neighboring Germanic kingdoms, and the unrealistic ideals of the Italian aristocracy, faced Orestes with an insoluble dilemma. The troops desired to be settled in Italy, presumably under a similar regime of *hospitalitas* to that by which other barbarians had already been settled, albeit with fragmenting effect, elsewhere in the West.³³ And, in the last resort, it was in Italy that their presence was needed, to ward off the dangers that pressed from every side upon this last remnant of the Western Empire. On this rock the last Roman generalissimo, and indeed the whole institution of generalissimo, as it had been developing for almost a

century, foundered. Orestes either did not want to formalize the settlement of barbarians in Italy (whether out of deference to the wishes of Italian landowners or for bureaucratic reasons), or simply could not make up his mind fast enough to keep pace with the volatile situation. Given time, he might have acceded to their demands or found some compromise involving, no doubt, some further swallowing of Roman pride, but events were moving with startling speed.³⁴ From among their own ranks, the troops found a leader who promised to give them the settlement that Orestes, the Roman, was unwilling to concede. Here was the novel spectacle of a *generalissimo* being swept away, just as *generalissimos* had become accustomed to sweeping away undesirable emperors, by a new kind of figure. Orestes lost his life in the mutiny on 28 August 476. His emperor was considered so harmless that he was pensioned off and sent to live in a castle in Campania.³⁵ Thus the “*caduta senza rumore*”³⁶ of the Western Empire was not the fall of the last western emperor (Nepos, the official emperor in the eyes of Constantinople, survived in Dalmatia till 480); it was the fall of the last of the *generalissimos*.

The leader of the revolt, the man who made himself Orestes' successor, was Odovacar,³⁷ one of Orestes' own leading officers. A German, probably of the Scirian tribe (though he was claimed by other barbarian groups who were at this time in the service of the Western Empire),³⁸ he was born in 433,³⁹ and came to Italy from Pannonia with a band of followers in the late 460s. In 472 he was among the bodyguard of Anthemius, and then, after the breach between Anthemius and Ricimer, he went over to the side of the latter.⁴⁰ Here he must have learned much of his military, and perhaps also political, shrewdness; in the broad direction of his later policies he retained many of the social ideas of Ricimer.⁴¹ No details are known about his activities between 472 and 476; during these years he consolidated his position and won some sort of following among the Germanic troops in Italy, and when serious discontent broke out among them in 476 he promptly presented

himself as their leader. On 23 August, after his first victory at Ticinum, they hailed him as their king, and within a matter of days Orestes had fallen and Odovacar was master of the West.

What is novel and significant about this elevation to the kingship is not that a barbarian king should have held the position of Roman generalissimo; both Alaric and Attila aspired to this position, and Gaiseric desired it for his son. Odovacar, however, had not entered Roman service as king of a specific barbarian nation who were to become Roman foederati. On the contrary, he was acclaimed king of a motley assortment of barbarians of various tribal origins who had entered Roman service at various times and as individuals or small bands, and whose sole unifying feature, apart from the common Germanic background of most of them, was that they all happened to find themselves in Italy. Although the Heruls, Turcilingi, Rogi, and Goths⁴² all claimed him as their king, their common acclamation of him, and their unification, under his leadership, around the issue of their permanent settlement on Italian soil, represented a new kind of amalgamation and the birth of a new nation in the very heart of what had been the Roman Empire. In light of the direction in which history was moving, the most appropriate title for Odovacar is "King of Italy."

He was not, of course, recognized in this capacity by the citizens of the empire, nor did he aspire to rule them as a mere external conqueror rules his subjects. His ambition was to step into the line of western Roman generalissimos, to be *de facto* ruler of Italy, but to be recognized by the Roman citizens as agent, as commander-in-chief, of their legitimate emperor. His Germanic subjects would be bound to him by ties of personal loyalty, ties by which, with increasing strength, the troops of every successful generalissimo had been bound. Odovacar and his followers together would be at the service of that remote and mysterious imperial power which still cast a spell over so many minds, Roman and barbarian alike. Honorius and Valentinian III had been able to inspire awe, or, in any event, had been very

valuable figureheads, purely by virtue of their descent from Theodosius the Great. Once the Theodosian house was extinct, the sordid reality of the puppets wearing the purple could not be ignored. At the same time, an emperor with the temperament of an Anthemius or a Nepos made it impossible for the *generalissimos* to function in the manner to which they had grown accustomed (which, indeed, was necessary if the allegiance of the troops was to be maintained). The throne of Constantinople still commanded enormous respect; the relative stability of the Eastern Empire, and the presence there of emperors who really ruled, and held their thrones for more than a year or two at a time, must have made it seem, to western eyes, the very repository of legitimacy. At the same time, seen from the standpoint of Odovacar, it had the virtue, which all awesome things should have, of being conveniently remote. Ricimer (and after him Gundobad and Orestes) was not always in a hurry to fill a vacancy on the western throne. Odovacar, in his turn, faced with a choice between the farce of setting up another puppet like Romulus and the irksomeness of restoring Nepos, decided that the best solution would be to keep Italy permanently free of any embodiment of the imperial dignity; a sole emperor in Constantinople could not possibly interfere in the minutiae of western government, and could hopefully be kept happy by appropriate diplomacy, but at the same time his seal of approval could confer a legitimacy on Odovacar's authority, which would carry weight in the eyes of the western Roman citizens.

Odovacar forthwith set about seeking this seal of approval in the form of the patriciate. The Roman senate, supposedly on the command of Romulus, sent an embassy to the eastern emperor Zeno informing him that the West did not need a separate emperor, for they had a certain Odovacar,

ἱκανὸν ὄντα σώζειν τὰ παρ' αὐτοῖς πράγματα,
πολιτικὴν ἔχοντα σύνεσιν ὁμοῦ καὶ μάχιμον,

and requesting Zeno,

πατρικίου τε αὐτῷ ἀποστεῖλαι ἀξίαν καὶ τὴν τῶν
Ἱταλῶν τοῦτῳ ἐφεῖναι διοίκησιν. (Malch. frg. 10)

At the same time, the imperial insignia were sent to Constantinople on the grounds that they were no longer needed.⁴³ There is probably much truth in the suggestion that it was for the purpose of this formal abdication that Odovacar had spared Romulus's life.⁴⁴ The situation was further complicated by an embassy from Nepos, still in Dalmatia, requesting Zeno to assist in restoring him in Italy. Zeno had only recently recovered his own throne from a usurper, and realized that he was in no position to supply Nepos with the massive assistance the latter would need if he were to overthrow Odovacar, who was clearly in firm military control of Italy. Zeno doubtless also realized that Odovacar's proposal represented a significant new step in the disintegration of the West, and that Italy itself was in the process of slipping out of the empire just as various other places had already done, but that under the circumstances nothing could be gained by spurning Odovacar's friendly overtures. At the same time, impotent as Nepos was in controlling Italy, Zeno could not simply abandon someone whom Constantinople had previously recognized as Augustus and who was related by marriage to himself. So he adopted what can only be interpreted as a deliberately ambiguous stance, "a piece either of great vacillation or of great duplicity," as Hodgkin aptly termed it.⁴⁵ He instructed the Roman senators to take back Nepos as western emperor. He urged Odovacar, but in more delicate terms, to do the same thing, and to request the patriciate from Nepos. If Nepos should withhold it, this honor would be granted by Zeno, and, as an earnest of his good will and a final sop to the real ruler of Italy, he addressed Odovacar as patrician in his letter of reply. His reply to Nepos conveyed his sympathy.

Odovacar, needless to say, did nothing to restore Nepos to the western throne, and there is no evidence that he ever used the term "patricius" as one of his titles. It has been proposed that Odovacar did in fact recognize Nepos as western emperor, but that some kind

of agreement, tacit or explicit, was made that Nepos should not attempt to return to Italy.⁴⁶ One can hardly imagine Nepos openly consenting to such an abject arrangement, but this proposal may nonetheless contain another facet of the truth, at least to the extent that Odovacar, diplomatic enough to appreciate Zeno's dilemma, may have consented, tacitly or otherwise, to refrain from explicitly and actively refusing allegiance to Nepos, so long as Nepos took no practical steps to assert himself as western ruler. In such circumstances, the murder of Nepos in 480 would have meant, for both Odovacar and Zeno, the removal of an embarrassment; Odovacar even made a point of avenging Nepos's death. Until 480, however, the situation was so deliberately ambiguous that it is otiose to argue about whether Zeno or Nepos did or did not confer a patriciate on Odovacar, and what would have been the exact constitutional significance of such a patriciate, and whether it was meant to include the powers of the military *magisterium* or was merely a civilian patriciate.⁴⁷ These three or four years of ambiguity, in which Odovacar ignored Nepos but declined to nominate a rival, and Zeno continued to pretend that Nepos was western emperor but declined to give him any concrete support, radically changed the role of *generalissimo*. Whatever may have been Odovacar's intentions in 476, Zeno's ambivalent attitude and the absence of a real western emperor left Odovacar with "rex" as his only meaningful title, and this, to judge by the literary sources and the two surviving documents of his reign, is what he styled himself for the rest of his life.⁴⁸ Furthermore, although the sources refer to him as king of various Germanic tribes, he himself does not append anything to the simple title, "rex."

It is very questionable whether one should say, in the language of Ensslin, that Zeno's addressing of Odovacar as patrician in the above-mentioned letter provided the latter with the "staatrechtliche Grundlage der Herrschaftsstellung über die Römer."⁴⁹ In the new circumstances of Italy, the old combination of "patricius" and "magister utriusque militiae" had lost its unique significance for designating the *generalissimo*, and Odovacar must have quickly

stopped caring whether he had ever formally received these titles or not. What mattered most to him, as to every one of his predecessors, was the real power that he wielded, not the terminology used. Where Odovacar differed from his predecessors was that his relationship to his troops no longer depended upon his being patrician; he was now their king.⁵⁰ The “rex” had replaced, as working title and badge of office, the old “magister utriusque militiae ac patricius”; like them, it was of an essentially military character, but with time it, too, extended to civil and Roman matters, and even, to a certain extent, to ecclesiastical affairs.⁵¹ The standard scholarly view has been that Odovacar was never *rex Italiae* and that his kingship was restricted in its sway to Germans.⁵² In a completely different vein, it has been argued that Odovacar, and Theoderic after him, were simply and solely kings, of barbarians and Romans alike, and received no eastern recognition as anything else.⁵³

That the same meager evidence can be used to support such widely diverging views is due to the ambiguity of the position taken by Zeno on the occasion of the two embassies in 476 or 477. This ambiguity was never afterward cleared up, and it seems rather inappropriate to seek, as certain scholars have done, for the precision of constitutional law in such a situation. The special pregnant use of the title of patrician, as applied to the western generalissimos, enjoyed no constitutional sanction;⁵⁴ it was a mere working term that served a purpose for a time, but as the situation continued to evolve, that special use of it was abandoned.

After the demise of Nepos in 480, there was a period of friendly relations between Zeno and Odovacar, during which the emperor chose tacitly to accept the status quo regarding Italy, without defining anything more clearly. Zeno’s amicable disposition toward Odovacar at this stage is reflected in his attitude to a Gallic embassy that, after the death of Nepos, indicated to Zeno that the Gallo-Romans did not wish to be subject to Odovacar. Zeno tended rather to favor Odovacar, who had sent a rival embassy at the same time.⁵⁵ Even more significantly, there had been

no western consul since 472, but starting in 480 Odovacar began to nominate one (always, of course, a Roman citizen) just as his predecessors had done, and these western consuls probably received recognition in the East. This, of course, does not mean that Zeno had conferred on Odovacar the power of making consuls, or even that any specific agreement had been negotiated on the subject; it simply means that he chose to leave one consulate vacant and to elevate to it the nominee of Odovacar.⁵⁶

This restoration of the consulate, an empty honor but much desired by members of the Italian aristocracy, must have served, and may have been primarily intended, to conciliate the senatorial faction, a policy Odovacar inherited from his predecessors. This policy was probably also reflected in the institution of the *caput* or *prior senatus*, which is first reported in the West in 490 (Anon. Val. 53) and did not exist under the western emperors; its creation must be owing to an initiative of Odovacar. Following restoration of the Colosseum in the first half of Odovacar's reign, seat marks assigned the best seats to members of the senatorial class, an indication that their prestige in the city of Rome was maintained intact in this period. Instances are also available of Odovacar's cordial relations with particular senators and of honors he bestowed upon them.⁵⁷

Odovacar's respectful attitude toward both the senate and the emperor is reflected in his coinage policy.⁵⁸ Gold coins throughout his reign bore only the emperor's name and effigy. Senatorial minting of bronze coins was reinstated; they bear the letters "SC." Other bronze coins carry Odovacar's monogram. Some bronze and silver coins bear Odovacar's effigy and name ("Fl. Odac." or "Odovac."); it is likely that these date to the later years of his reign, after the breakdown of relations with the East. At no time did he ever style himself "rex" on his coins, and on those coins bearing his effigy he appears in a soldier's outfit, with no attributes of royalty. Evidently he wished to be depicted as patricius, for this was his official status vis-à-vis the Romans.

In carrying out the promised settlement of his troops in Italy, Odovacar was not departing from the policy of his predecessors;

he was merely taking the logical step of extending to Italy an arrangement that had already been sanctioned elsewhere by other generalissimos.⁵⁹ Odovacar himself possessed extensive domains, called the royal *patrimonium*, and consisting, apparently, of parts of the old imperial domains and of lands confiscated after 476. These domains included all of Sicily and Dalmatia, both of which were acquired by Odovacar, the former through an agreement made with Gaiseric shortly before the Vandal king's death in January 477,⁶⁰ and the latter as the result of an expedition made in 481–82, ostensibly to avenge the murder of Nepos.⁶¹ This *patrimonium* was under the administration of a *comes et vicedominus*; this office was evidently not considered part of the regular civil administration, because it could be held by a German.⁶² Under Odovacar's kingship, the regular civil offices were reserved for Romans (and Odovacar, while a Roman citizen himself, did not presume to confer the citizenship on others), while the military career was normally reserved for barbarians, Odovacar appointing his own *magistri militum*.⁶³ In not returning Sicily or Dalmatia to the domain of the *praefectus praetorio* of Italy, to which they had formerly belonged, it seems that Odovacar was anxious to keep these strategically important areas out of the hands of the senate.

In the area of foreign relations, Odovacar regularly pursued a conciliatory policy toward his fellow Germanic kings, evidently feeling that his forces were so small⁶⁴ and his position in Italy so precarious as to preclude major campaigns outside of that country. In the first year of his reign, he formed a treaty with Gaiseric, by the terms of which he obtained Sicily from the Vandals in return for an annual tribute and the concession of a part of the island, most plausibly assumed to be Lilybaeum, to Vandal control.⁶⁵ At some point he agreed to the Visigothic occupation of the last Roman remnants of Gaul; this seems to have been in the nature of a recognition of a *fait accompli*, for scattered references in the chronicles indicate that Euric had taken advantage of the chaotic condition of the West around the time of Odovacar's seizure of power to occupy all of Provence.⁶⁶

In the light of Odovacar's position in Italy and of his general policy, it seems improbable that he would have planned an attack on the Eastern Empire in 486, either in connivance with the rebel Illus, as Zeno apparently suspected,⁶⁷ or simply to take advantage, on his own account, of the difficulties that Zeno was having with Illus and Theoderic simultaneously.⁶⁸ In 486, whether the threat from Odovacar was a real or merely a suspected one,⁶⁹ Zeno aimed at forestalling an attack by instigating the Rugian tribe, which inhabited the region of modern Austria north of the Danube, to plan an invasion of Italy. Odovacar replied with two vigorous campaigns into the Rugian heartland in 487 and 488, in which the tribe was utterly crushed, but following these events he decided that in this region also, the boundaries of his realm would have to be consolidated along the line of the Alps. Noricum Ripense, he decided, was untenable by the forces he had at his disposal, so it was abandoned and the Roman population evacuated to Italy.⁷⁰

At this point, the relationship between Odovacar and Constantinople, clearly never one of great mutual trust, was ruined. Odovacar dutifully sent Zeno a share of his Rugian spoils, evidently as a token of his own status as an imperial subordinate, and Zeno went through the motions of expressing satisfaction with this Roman victory. Eastern recognition of western consuls was resumed after a break of two years (486–87), but, wherever the fault for the breakdown in relations is to be laid, Zeno was now overtly working for Odovacar's downfall.⁷¹

Theoderic the Amal presented him with the opportunity to destroy Odovacar's power, or, at the very least, to seriously weaken two barbarian armies by setting them in opposition. For years Theoderic and his Ostrogothic followers had been seeking a permanent home in the ravaged Balkans, and as far back as 479 he had proposed to Zeno that he be given the commission to restore Nepos on the western throne.⁷² Now, in 488, Zeno, possibly moved as much by a desire to rid himself of the troublesome Theoderic as to reconquer Italy, instigated Theoderic to

lead his Ostrogoths in a grand invasion of Italy, with the promise that if he were victorious over Odovacar, he should take his place.⁷³ As a pretext for the action, Theoderic claimed that he was avenging the recent death of his relatives, the Rugian king and his wife, at Odovacar's hands.⁷⁴ In 489 the great campaign began; it lasted four years.

John of Antioch reports, with no indication of date, that Odovacar raised his son Thela to the rank of Caesar. Most scholars date this event during the final struggle and assume it indicated a complete break with the East and the restoration of the western imperial throne.⁷⁵ According to this assumption, Odovacar made the move to win to his side elements hostile to the East, for supporters of constitutional legitimacy were inclining to support Theoderic, who claimed to be acting in the name of the emperor.⁷⁶ It is argued that this usurpation provided the ground for later labelling Odovacar a tyrant.⁷⁷ If, however, Odovacar really intended to reverse his former policy and play at being emperor-maker in the style of earlier generalissimos, it is surprising that he should have made his son Caesar (the title used in the only source, John of Antioch), rather than Augustus. Furthermore, it seems unlikely that he would have succeeded in rallying to his support very many Roman citizens, however hostile they might have been to the East, by the elevation to the imperial throne of a full-blooded barbarian. This single passing reference more probably means that Thela was being marked out as heir-apparent to his father's throne; the dating to 490 is quite plausible, and the move can be interpreted as an emphatic affirmation by Odovacar of the permanence of his kingdom even though his own life was in jeopardy owing to the current war with Theoderic.

Writing long after the fall of Odovacar, Procopius refers to his rule as a tyranny, and states that its duration was ten years.⁷⁸ Procopius is probably giving the strict legitimist interpretation, and his words provide an interesting insight into the view of Odovacar's reign taken at Constantinople after the event. In

Procopius's day, there was an official fiction that Odovacar's rule had begun only upon the death of Nepos, and had ended in 490 with the first victories of Theoderic, and that even within these years the legitimacy was dubious, though recognition had to be made of its *de facto* existence.⁷⁹ There is no evidence that Zeno ever clarified his ambiguous posture about Odovacar in the years that followed.

Toward Theoderic, Zeno adopted a similarly cautious approach, dismissing him to Italy with the promise that if he defeated Odovacar he should take the latter's place as Zeno's viceroy.⁸⁰ Although the later official version of events seems to have been that Theoderic had formally replaced Odovacar in 490, this was by no means recognized at the time. When Zeno dispatched Theoderic to Italy, the latter was leading his troops in the capacity of patrician and *magister militum*; precisely what validity these titles, originally conferred in the East, were intended to have in Italy, was left vague, and quite deliberately so.⁸¹ The repetition of the title "patricius" by Anonymus Valesianus throughout the account of Theoderic's conquest of Italy probably reflects an emphasis placed upon this title by Theoderic himself, presumably for the benefit of the Romans.⁸² After his decisive victory at the Adda in 490, Theoderic seems to have won the support of the Roman senate, either, as is commonly supposed, because they felt he had the support of Constantinople, as reflected in his rank of patrician, or, as is very probable, because they simply felt that he was now the winner and that it would be injudicious to continue supporting Odovacar. Before the end of 490, the highest-ranking senator, Festus, went to Constantinople as ambassador of Theoderic to ask Zeno for the final settlement of his promise, now that Theoderic was clearly the victor; most interesting is the information that Theoderic desired to receive the kingship from the hand of Zeno.⁸³ Zeno, however, continued to withhold recognition, evidently feeling that so long as Odovacar lived the situation might still change.

A more pragmatic approach than Zeno's cannot be imagined; his primary intention clearly was that the two barbarian leaders

should inflict the maximum of damage upon each other, and that, when it became necessary to do so, he would deal with the survivor according to the new circumstances, whatever they might be. Zeno himself died in 491 and so did not see the end of Odovacar, but his successor, Anastasius, pursued exactly the same cautious and waiting policy even after Odovacar had been killed. In 492 a second embassy of Roman senators was sent to Constantinople to request in vain the recognition of Theoderic.⁸⁴ By the time of Odovacar's death in 493 the embassy had not returned, and Theoderic's army, not waiting for further action on Anastasius's part, proceeded to acclaim Theoderic as their king.⁸⁵ Theoderic was, of course, already king of the Ostrogothic nation, or such of them, at least, as had chosen to follow him to Italy. This new acclamation can be compared with that of Odovacar in 476; on this occasion, Theoderic was being acclaimed by the entire body of his followers in Italy, Ostrogothic or not.⁸⁶

It is particularly significant that Theoderic had originally sought the title in 490 from the hand of the emperor himself. Here was a continuation of the trend begun by Odovacar: the new badge that distinguished the ruler of Italy and commander of her forces, the successor of the old generalissimos, was the title of "rex." Theoderic would have preferred to receive it from the emperor, thereby marking his place clearly in the evolving tradition, and indicating that he was part of the circle of civilization that the empire had come to symbolize. Failing this, however, he took it for himself and from this point on styled himself simply "rex," just as Odovacar had done.⁸⁷ He no longer chose to be called *patricius* and *magister militum*, because in the West these titles had now reverted to the meaning they had had prior to the days of Stilicho and Constantius, which they had never ceased to have in the East; they were no longer of use to Theoderic because they no longer designated the holder of real power. He was content to hold these titles while fighting for Zeno, but after his victory over Odovacar, he felt that he had earned, under the terms of his agreement with Zeno, the title of the real power in Italy.

An accord was finally reached between Theoderic and Anastasius in 497; Anonymus Valesianus simply states that peace was made concerning the matter of Theoderic's unauthorized assumption of the kingship ("de praesumptione regni"), and that Anastasius sent back the palace regalia ("ornamenta palatii") that Odovacar had sent to Constantinople.⁸⁸ One assumes, then, that Anastasius acquiesced in Theoderic's use of the title "rex" and in his status as a virtually autonomous ruler, but he was merely accepting a situation about which he could, for the moment, do nothing. A hundred years ago Hodgkin captured this feeling of deliberate vagueness on the part of the eastern ruler better than many later scholars who were obsessed with a quest for legalistic precision:

Thus . . . peace and friendship are established . . . and Theoderic is formally recognized as, in some sense or other, legitimate ruler in Italy. What was the precise relation thus established between the two monarchs I must give up the attempt to explain. I see no statement of a formal abandonment by the Empire of the sacred soil of Italy; yet neither do I see any formal recognition by Theoderic that he was governing it in the Emperor's name, or that the latter was his superior. To me the whole matter seems to have been purposely left vague, as is so often the case when Fact and Law are felt by all parties to be hopelessly at variance with one another.⁸⁹

It is in this uncertain atmosphere that the position of generalissimo, which had never been given clarity of definition, continued its process of evolution.

The idea of a special military ruler for the West, answerable to the emperor of Constantinople, was carried over into the exarchate,⁹⁰ though of course, when that time came, the emperors were very careful that the individuals in question would be men of their own choice, not barbarians who forced themselves into

power. But for the period of the Ostrogothic kingdom, it seems inappropriate to continue using the term “generalissimo” for individuals who were, in effect, independent monarchs;⁹¹ when Justinian attacked that kingdom, it was just as if he were attacking any other of the Germanic kingdoms that had sprung up in the West, for the position of generalissimo had already completed its cycle.

Notes

Chapter 1

1. Amm. Marc. 30. 6; Socrat. *HE* 4. 31. 6; *Cons. Const.* s.a. 375; Nagl, *RE* VIIA: 2187; Seeck, *Regesten*, p. 245.

2. I follow the excellent reconstruction of events by Demandt, *Historia* XVIII (1969): 598-626, with an extensive survey of earlier literature. Cf. also Rodgers, *Histoira* XXX (1981):82-89, who argues strongly that Merobaudes had no part in the death of Count Theodosius.

3. Philostorg. 8. 1. On his origin and background, see Demandt, *RE* Suppl. XII (1970): 593; *PLRE* I: 598; Waas, *Germanen im römischen Dienst*, pp. 93 f. During the period of his influence, he apparently furthered the careers of several of his fellow Franks in the Roman army; cf. Waas, *op. cit.*, pp. 26 f. The social background to the class of late Roman military officers and the implications of its rise to preeminence are explored by Demandt, *Chiron* X (1980): 609-36.

4. Amm. Marc. 30. 5. 13; Zos. 4. 17. 1. Demandt, *RE* Suppl. XII:593.

5. *PLRE* I: 934 f.; cf. Ensslin, *RE* VIIA (1948): 2207. The acclamation of Valentinian II took place on 22 November (Seeck, *Regesten*, p. 246).

6. Amm. Marc. 30. 10. 3. Cf. the circumstances that preceded the elevation of Gratian in 367 (Amm. Marc. 27. 6. 1 ff.).

7. PLRE I: 598 f. A strong case can also be made for his having received the patriciate; see Barnes, *Phoenix* XXIX (1975): 159 ff. In 377 Merobaudes overrode, and with impunity, the wish of Gratian to send some cohorts to assist Valens against the Goths by instigating most of the men to remain in Gaul, where he felt they were needed for defence (Amm. Marc. 31. 7. 4; that Merobaudes' part in this affair, reported by Ammianus as a rumor, is to be taken seriously, see Rodgers, *Historia* XXX [1981]: 101 f.).

8. PLRE I: 599. Third consulate: de Rossi, *Inscriptiones Christianae*, n.s., II, no. 5996. Demandt (*RE*, Suppl. XII: 598) and Waas (*Germanen im römischen Dienst*, pp. 42 ff.) are probably right in rejecting this third consulate, which would have had to be a nomination by Maximus; but cf. Rodgers, *Historia* XXX (1981): 95 f.

9. PLRE I: 401, 588.

10. *Pan. Lat.* 2. 28. Cf. Vetter, *Rhein. Mus.* CIII (1960): 370; Rodgers, *Historia* XXX (1981): 97 ff.

11. Cf. Seeck, *Untergang* V: 499 (who, however, doubts that the suicide was forced by Maximus); Vetter, *Rhein. Mus.* CIII (1960): 369 f.; Demandt, *RE* Suppl. XII: 598 f., 606, 607; Rodgers, *Historia* XXX (1981): 93 ff., 100 ff. The suicide did not necessarily take place right after the death of Gratian—indeed there is reason to believe that Merobaudes may have been alive a couple of years later (cf. Rodgers, *ibid.*, pp. 94 f.). It is not necessary to suggest, as does Hodgkin (*Italy and Her Invaders* I: 410, n. 2), that Prosper's text may be corrupt. Rauschen (*Jahrbücher*, pp. 529 f.) suggested that Merobaudes did not betray Gratian, but that after Gratian's death he went into the service of Theodosius, and is to be identified with the *dux Aegypti* of *Cod. Theod.* 11. 30. 43, of the year 384 (listed in PLRE I: 598, as "Merobaudes I"); this has not met with scholarly approval, but cf. Rodgers, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

12. The most recent systematic examination of the military magisterium is Demandt's "Magister Militum," *RE* Suppl. XII (1970): 553 ff., which largely supersedes the work of Mommsen (*Ges. Schr.* IV: 545-57; VI: 266-72), Ensslin (*Klio* XXIII [1930]: 306-25; XXIV [1931]: 102-47, 467-502), and Hoepffner (*Byzantion* XI [1936]: 483-98). See also Hoffmann, *Das spätromische Bewegungsheer*, *passim*, and *idem*, *Actes du IXe congrès*, pp. 381 ff.

13. Its full title is *Notitia omnium dignitatum et administrationum tam civilium quam militarium*, and its unique value lies in the fact that in origin it was an official list, drawn up for use by the office of the *primicerius notariorum*. It was subject to periodic revisions, and at a certain point, presumably when the time came to replace it with a new edition, the archetype of our surviving copy fell into the possession of some individual in the West, to whom we owe its preservation. The dating of its separate eastern and western parts, the circumstances in which the eastern list was brought to the West and joined to a western list, and the detecting and dating of the alterations that were carried out mainly on the western list—these, together with a host of other problems to which the document gives rise, have long been fruitful sources of controversy. Although some aspects of the *Notitia* will be discussed further in relation to Stilicho's career, no attempt will be made to contribute to the major areas of controversy, and questions of dating will deliberately be left as vague as is consonant with the needs of the present work. The most recent major study of the *Notitia* is that of Clemente, *La "Notitia Dignitatum"* (Cagliari, 1968), to which must be added extended articles by Ward, *Latomus* XXXIII (1974): 397 ff., and Demougeot, *Latomus* XXXIV (1975): 1079 ff.; this recent work largely replaces earlier studies by Bury, Polaschek, Jones, and others. Mention should also be made of Hoffmann, *Das spätromische Bewegungsheer* (Düsseldorf, 1969), an enormous work whose overall construction was designed to support a thesis that has not found universal approval (cf. esp. Demandt, *Germania* LI [1973]: 272 ff.), but which abounds in valuable insights on particular points. The definitive edition of the *Notitia* is that of Seeck (Berlin, 1876, reprinted).

14. *Not. Dig. occ.* 5, 6. Cf. pp. 18f. in this volume.

15. This was Mommsen's view (cf. n. 12 above). Ensslin, on the contrary, felt that the magister equitum had been given the position of supremacy in the Constantinian system, and that this had lasted until the career of Merobaudes, who prevailed upon Gratian to reverse things in favor of the magister peditum (*Klio* XXIV [1931]: 145 f.).

16. All the references to these offices from the fourth century have been assembled by Ensslin, *Klio* XXIII (1930): 306–25. Cf. also Hoepffner, *Byzantion* XI (1936): 492 f.; Demandt, *RE* Suppl. XII: 612, 783. For a similar imprecision in Stilicho's titlature, see pp. 19 ff. in this volume.

17. The view expressed in the foregoing pages is essentially that of Hoepffner, *Byzantion* XI (1936): 487–91, as endorsed and modified by Demandt, *RE* Suppl. XII: 603 ff., 612, 784. On the basis of his theory that in the period after Merobaudes the magistri peditum held the highest rank, Ensslin, *Klio* XXIV (1931): 134 ff., quite unnecessarily postulated a "promotion" of both Bauto and

Arbogast to this rank, which is nowhere attested in the sources. Hoffmann (*Actes du IXe congrès*, p. 387, n. 43) very wisely advises of the importance of distinguishing “Institutionelles und Faktisches”; his criticisms, however, would be directed more appropriately against Ensslin than against Demandt.

18. Zos. 4. 33. 2; Amb. *Ep.* 24. 8; Seeck, *RE* III: 176; *PLRE* I: 159 f.; Waas, *Germanen im römischen Dienst*, pp. 77 ff.

19. *PLRE* I: 905; Lippold, *RE* Suppl. XIII: 840 ff. Dacia and Macedonia: Sozom. 7. 4.

20. Zos. 4. 33. 1; John Ant. frg. 187; Philostorg. 11. 6; Ensslin, *Klio* XXIV (1931): 132, 134; Demandt, *RE* Suppl. XII: 600, 607 f.

21. Amb. *Ep.* 24. 7.

22. Amb. *Ep.* 24. 4.

23. This surely is the import of Amb. *Ep.* 57. 3. Cf. Symm. *Rel.* 3; Amb. *Ep.* 17, 18; Seeck, *Untergang* V: 511 f.; Dudden, *St. Ambrose*, pp. 258 ff., 380 f., 413 f.; Demandt, *RE* Suppl. XII: 607 f.; Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, pp. 204 ff.; Klein, *Der Streit um den Victoriaaltar*, passim; Paschoud, ed., Zos. 4, pp. 403 f., n. 163.

24. Friendship with Symmachus: Symm. *Ep.* 4. 15, 16. His daughter: Philostorg. 11. 6; Zos. 5. 3.

25. *PLRE* I: 159.

26. On his background, see Seeck, *RE* II: 415; *PLRE* I: 96 f.; Waas, *Germanen im römischen Dienst*, pp. 70 ff. Cf. Ewig, *Historische Forschungen für Walter Schlesinger*, p. 59.

27. Zos. 4. 33. 1-2; Eunap. frg. 53. Ensslin, *Klio* XXIV (1931): 133 suggests very plausibly that at this time Arbogast may have held the rank of *comes domesticorum*. John Ant. (frg. 187) is surely mistaken in making him the son of Bauto; but cf. Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders* I: 550 f.; Demandt, *RE* Suppl. XII: 609 and *Chiron* X (1980): 629.

28. Zos. 4. 53. 1; John Ant. frg. 187. Cf. Demandt, *RE* Suppl. XII: 609. On Ensslin's idea (*Klio* XXIV [1931]: 134-36) that Arbogast already held the *magisterium equestre* in Bauto's lifetime, and was “promoted” to the *magisterium pedestre* on Bauto's death, see Demandt, pp. 608 f.

29. Oros. 7. 35. 12; Philostorg. 10. 8; Greg. Tur. *HF* 2. 9; Zos. 4. 47. 1; Pseud. Aur. Vict. *Epit.* 48. 6; Cons. Const. s.a. 388; Cons. Ital. s.a. 388; Prosp. 1191; Hydat. 17.

30. Eunap. frg. 53. It is quite unnecessary to doubt, as does Seeck (*RE* II: 415 f.; *Untergang* V: 236), that Arbogast held the magisterium at this time, purely on the grounds that our surviving sources refer to him only as “comes”; cf. Ensslin, *Klio* XXIV (1931): 135 f.; Stein, *Bas-Empire* I: 531, n. 119; Paschoud, ed., Zos. 4, pp. 452 f., n. 200. At the other extreme, Mommsen (*Ges. Schr.* IV: 555) felt that Arbogast combined in his own person the two chief magisteria; on this view, see Demandt, *RE Suppl.* XII: 611.

31. Paul. Mil. *Vit. Amb.* 30; Greg. Tur. *HF* 2. 9. Cf. Demougeot, *De l'unité*, p. 203, n. 445.

32. Sulpicius Alexander, ap. Greg. Tur. *HF* 2. 9; John Ant. frg. 187; Zos. 4. 53; Stroheker, *Germanentum und Spätantike*, p. 22. Orosius (7. 35. 11) says he used his relations with the Franks to bring auxiliaries into the empire.

33. Cf. Stein, *Bas-Empire* I: 210, 531, n. 118.

34. *Amb. Ep.* 53. 2; *Amb. De ob. Val.* 6, 12, 32, 66, 71; Ensslin, *RE* VIIA: 2226.

35. The curious circumstance of increasingly warm relations between the pagan conservative senators and certain Frankish generals is explored by Stroheker, *Germanentum und Spätantike*, pp. 22–29. Conciliation of the senate was a cornerstone of the policy of all the generalissimos.

36. *Amb. De ob. Val.* 52; *Amb. Ep.* 57. 5; Ensslin, *RE* VIIA, 2226. Cf. p. 7 at n. 23 in this volume.

37. Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders* I: 551 f.

38. John Ant. frg. 187; Zos. 4. 53. 4. Cf. Libanius *Ep.* 1302.

39. Cf. Seeck, *Untergang* V: 240.

40. The rather confused details of this affair are discussed by Ensslin, *RE* VIIA, 2226 f.; it may also represent an attempt to move the court back to Milan, where Valentinian's sisters had continued to reside; cf. Palanque, *Saint Ambroise*, p. 267.

41. Zos. 4. 53. 3; John Ant. frg. 187; Sulpicius Alexander ap. Greg. Tur. *HF* 2. 9. Cf. Paschoud, ed., Zos. 4, pp. 453 f., n. 201.

42. Philostorg. 11. 1; cf. Seeck, *Untergang* V: 241, 536 f.

43. For the date, Epiphan. *De mens. et pond.* 20.

44. The sources are exhaustively classified, and modern opinions discussed, by Ensslin, *RE* VIIA: 2227 ff., who himself tends to the view that Valentinian was murdered, but without Arbogast's complicity. More recently a similar exercise has been performed by Croke, *Historia* XXV (1976): 235–44, who appears to lean in favor of suicide; but cf. Paschoud, ed., Zos. 4, pp. 455 ff., n. 203.

45. Seeck, *RE* II: 417, *Untergang* V: 242, 537; Solari, *L'Antiquité classique* I (1932): 273 f.; Paschoud, ed., *Zos.* 4, pp. 455 ff., n. 203.

46. Arcadius, born ca. 377, proclaimed Augustus 383 (*PLRE* I: 99). Honorius, born 384, styled “nobilissimus puer” as early as 386 (*ibid.*, p. 442).

47. Rufin. *HE* 2. 31; Seeck, *Untergang* V: 243, 537.

48. Pearce, *Valentinian I—Theodosius I*, pp. xxiv f. Cf. Stein, *Bas-Empire* I: 532 f., n. 137; Lippold, *RE* Suppl. XIII: 896.

49. Rauschen (*Jahrbücher*, p. 367, n. 1) felt that the elevation of Eugenius must have taken place immediately after the death of Valentinian, and that the *Fasti vindobonenses priores* (*Chron. Min.* I: 298), which mistakenly place the death of Valentinian on 10 August, are also mistaken in placing the elevation of Eugenius to 22 August.

50. *PLRE* I: 348. Cf. Stein, *Bas-Empire* I: 211, 212, 532, n. 133; Lippold, *RE* Suppl. XIII: 896.

51. *Zos.* 4. 52; Eunap. frg. 59; Claud. *In Ruf.* 1. 244 ff.; *PLRE* I: 746 f., 876 ff.; Dagron, *Naissance d'une capitale*, pp. 255 ff., 288 f.; Paschoud ed., *Zos.* 4, pp. 449 ff., n. 199. Recently, however, J. Szidat has plausibly argued (*Historia* XXVIII (1979): 492 ff.) that Arbogast was in no way threatened by Theodosius's actions against the pagans, for it was quite in order at the time for a barbarian commander to be a pagan; Theodosius's actions accord with his generally intolerant religious stance, and if they were stepped up at this time it was for the purpose of winning the support of Ambrose and the more committed western Christians; further, we must not see any special religious motivation behind the actions of Arbogast.

52. *PLRE* I: 293; Straub, *RAC* VI: 860 f. Orosius sums up the matter quite bluntly:

Eugenium tyrannum mox creare ausus est legitque hominem, cui
titulum imperatoris imponeret; ipse acturus imperium vir barbarus. . . . (7. 35. 11)

53. Pearce, *Valentinian I—Theodosius I*, pp. xxiv f.; *Année épigraphique*, 1953, no. 271 (*ILS*, no. 790); Momigliano, ed., *Paganism and Christianity*, pp. 200 f.

54. *Cod. Theod.* 16. 10. 12.

55. *Zos.* 4. 55. 3–4; John Ant. frg. 187. Paschoud (ed., *Zos.* 4, p. 459, n. 205.) seems to feel that this is the same embassy as that referred to by Rufin. *HE* 2.31; see above, n. 47.

56. Seeck, *Regesten*, p. 281, *Untergang* V: 246. By the beginning of 393 the sway of Eugenius and Arbogast seems to have extended to the entire West except

Africa, where Gildo remained nominally loyal to Theodosius, though evidently attempting to keep a foot in both camps; cf. Stein, *Bas-Empire* I: 212, 532, n. 135; Lippold, *RE Suppl.* XIII: 896

57. *PLRE* I: 442. On the exact dating, Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders* I: 567, n. 2; Seeck, *Untergang* V: 539. Although Theodosius clearly intended to install Honorius as sole emperor in the West, it is out of keeping with the nature of the imperial rank to state, as does H. Bloch (*HThR* XXXVIII [1945]: 228; repeated in Momigliano, ed., *Paganism and Christianity*, p. 199), that Theodosius bestowed on Honorius the dignity of Augustus in the West, thus declaring Eugenius a usurper. Theodosius declared Eugenius a usurper by declining to recognize him, not by making Honorius an emperor.

58. Greg. Tur. *HF* 2. 9; Paul. Mil. *Vit. Amb.* 30; *CIL*, XIII: 8262 (*ILS*, no. 790) (cf. Bloch, *HThR* XXXVIII [1945]: 226 f.). Cf. Oros. 7. 35. 11.

59. *Amb. Ep.* 57. 6; Paul. Mil. *Vit. Amb.* 26. Cf. Dudden, *Saint Ambrose*, pp. 423 f.; Straub, *RAC* VI: 864 ff.; Chastagnol, *Hommages à Marcel Renard* II: 143 f.; Paschoud, *Cinq Etudes*, pp. 117 ff.; Szidat, *Historia* XXVIII (1979): 496 ff. Pro-Theodosian propaganda, both then and later, made much of the pagan threat and underplayed the purely political side of the usurpation; cf. O'Donnell, *Phoenix* XXXII (1978): 129-43; Szidat, *op.cit.*, *passim*.

60. The date: Socrat. *HE* 5. 25. The pagan images: August. *De civ. Dei* 5. 26 (cf. Szidat, *Historia* XXVIII [1979]: 505 f.). Death of Arbogast: *PLRE* I: 96. On the setting and circumstances of the battle: Seeck and Veith, *Klio* XIII (1913): 451-67, with map at end of volume; Bloch, *HThR* XXXVIII (1945): 235 ff.; Straub, *RAC* VI: 869 ff.; Paschoud, ed., *Zos.* 4, appendix C, pp. 474 ff. (who conveniently assembles and classifies all the ancient sources on the battle).

61. Socrat. *HE* 5. 26; Rufin. *HE* 11. 34; Philostorg. 11. 2; Claud. *III Cons. Hon.* 105-25, *VI Cons. Hon.* 88-100. Mazzolani (*Galla Placidia*, p. 26) remarks astutely that the well-known picture that Claudian (*Laus Ser.* 104-10) gives of Serena as the favorite and confidante of Theodosius, the only person capable of soothing his terrible rages, must have been the image of herself that Serena wished to propagate, for from the favor of the emperor derived her and her family's prestige. In general, on Serena, see Mazzarino, *Serena e le due Eudossie*, pp. 3-15.

62. *Amb. De ob. Theod.*; Socrat. *HE* 5. 26, 6. 1; Philostorg. 11. 2; Sozom. 7. 29; Oros. 7. 35. 23; *Zos.* 4. 59.4; *Chron. Pasch.* s.a. 394; Theodoret *HE* 5. 25.

Chapter 2

1. Cf. Hoffmann, *Das spätrömische Bewegungsheer* I: 30 f.
2. PLRE I: 778.
3. Claud. *Cons. Stil.* 1. 69-94; Claud. *Laus Ser.* 177-85; Zos. 4. 57. 2, 5. 4; Olympiod. frg. 2; Seeck, *RE* IIA: 1672 f.
4. *CIL* VI: 1730, 1731 (*ILS*, nos. 1277, 1278).
5. Jerome *Ep.* 123. 16; Oros. 7. 38.
6. Claud. *Cons. Stil.* 1. 36-39.
7. *CIL* VI: 1730 (*ILS*, no. 1277). Seeck, *RE* IIIA: 2523, *Untergang* V: 269, 547. Demougeot, *De l'unité*, pp. 130 f., esp. n. 70.
8. *Cod. Theod.* 6. 10. 1-3; *CIL* VI: 1730 (*ILS*, no. 1277); Demougeot, *De l'unité*, p. 131. This is disputed by Seeck, *Untergang* V: 547.
9. Claud. *Cons. Stil.* 1. 51-58 makes it seem as if Stilicho led the mission, but there is no need to take this at face value, as does Minn, *Prudentia* IV (1972): 23. According to Lydus *Mag.* 3. 53 the mission was led by Sporacius; cf. Seeck, *Untergang* V: 69, 269 f.; Demougeot, *De l'unité*, p. 131.
10. Demougeot, *De l'unité*, p. 132.
11. Cf. Demandt, *RE* Suppl. XII: 613.
12. So Mommsen, *Ges. Schr.* IV: 555 and Seeck, *Untergang* V: 270, published in 1920. By 1929, however, Seeck had changed his mind, and in *RE* IIIA: 2523, he agrees with the looser interpretation of the word.
13. The best recent discussions of Stilicho's early career are those of Demougeot, *De l'unité*, pp. 129-39, and Demandt, *RE* Suppl. XII: 715 f. They summarize the work of earlier scholars and in large part supersede the older work. See also PLRE I: 853 ff.; Clemente, *La "Notitia Dignitatum,"* pp. 165 ff.
14. *CIL* VI: 1730, 1731 (*ILS*, nos. 1277, 1278). Claud. *Laus Ser.* 190-93 says that the appointment to take charge of the horses in the royal stables was Stilicho's "primus honor," sc. after his marriage with Serena. The exact title of the position is uncertain; Demougeot's "comes stabuli sacri" (*De l'unité*, p. 132) is taken from *CIL* VI: 1731, where he is called "comes domesticorum et stabuli sacri"; Seeck (*RE* IIIA: 2523) and Demandt (*RE* Suppl. XII: 726) divide this

appointment into two stages: “tribunus stabuli” and “comes stabuli,” taking the “tribunus” of *CIL* VI: 1730 as referring to this and not an earlier stage of his career.

15. Demandt, *RE* Suppl. XII: 715. Demougeot, *De l'unité*, pp. 134 f., would place the appointment some time between 386 and 388.

16. *Cod. Theod.* 7. 4. 18; 7. 9. 3. At this time he is still an eastern commander—he is one of the five *magistri utriusque militiae* of the East; cf. p. 17 f. in this volume. Polaschek (*RE* XVII: 1086) is surely mistaken in taking this law to have been addressed to Stilicho as all-powerful *magister utriusque militiae* of the West. The question of whether this initial *magisterium* of Stilicho was a palatine or a regional command is debatable; cf. Ensslin, *Klio* XXIV (1931): 142 f.; Mazzarino, *Stilicone*, p. 100, n. 6; *PLRE* I: 854; Doise, *Ecole française de Rome: mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire* LXI (1949): 186 ff.

17. *Zos.* 4. 57. 2; *John Ant.* frg. 187.

18. *Not. Dig. or.* 5-9; Hoffmann, *Das spätrömische Bewegungsheer* I, chap. 10.

19. *Not. Dig. occ.* 5. 125-43. Cf. Martroye, *Bulletin de la Société nationale des antiquaires de France* (1916): 204 f.; Grosse, *Römische Militärgeschichte*, pp. 180-91, passim; Várady, *A. Ant. Hung.* IX (1961): 362 ff.; Jones, *Later Roman Empire* I: 174 f., II: 609 f.; Clemente, *La “Notitia Dignitatum,”* pp. 175-85; Demandt, *RE* Suppl. XII: 615-27.

20. *Magister utriusque militiae*: *Cod. Theod.* 7. 22. 12, of the year 398; 7. 5. 1, of 399; 7. 20. 12, of 400; 7. 20. 13, of 407; *CIL* VI: 1731, 1732, 1733. *Magister equitum peditumque*: *CIL* VI: 1730 (*ILS*, no. 1277). On the dating of these inscriptions, see Demougeot, *De l'unité*, p. 137, n. 108. Ensslin (*Klio* XXIII (1930): 306-25) traces the development of these titles through the fourth century; “*magister utriusque militiae*” is first attested in an inscription of 370 (*CIL* III: 5670 [*ILS*, no. 774]) and becomes common only under Theodosius.

21. *Magister militum*: *Cod. Theod.* 1. 7. 3, of 398; 7. 1. 18, of 400. *Comes et magister militum*: *ibid.*, 7. 13. 18.

22. *Claud Carm. min.* 50 is addressed to Jacobus; the dating to autumn 401 is suggested by Birt in his preface to *Claudii Claudiani carmina*, *MGH: AA* X (1892): lxii. *Zos.* 5. 32 tells us that Vincentius died in the military uprising at Ticinum that led to the fall of Stilicho; Sundwall (*Weströmische Studien*, p. 35) is not certain that he was a *magister equitum*, but cf. Ensslin, *Klio* XXIV (1931): 471; Clemente, *La “Notitia Dignitatum,”* p. 103, n. 95.

23. For a list of these theories and their authors up to 1970, see Demandt, *RE Suppl.* XII: 614; cf. also column 636.

24. The detection of various layers in the *Notitia* and assigning of dates to them forms a major theme running through scholarly study of this document; see the works cited in Chapter 1, n. 13. On Stilicho's transformation of the western military establishment and its reflection in the *Notitia*, see Clemente, *La "Notitia Dignitatum,"* pp. 175-85; Demandt, *RE Suppl.* XII: 615-27; Ward, *Latomus* XXXIII (1974): 422 f.; Demougeot, *Latomus* XXXIV (1975): 1095 f., 1103 f.; Mann, *Aspects of the Notitia Dignitatum*, pp. 3 ff. Clemente (*ibid.*, pp. 379 ff.) would see the maintenance and updating of the entire *Notitia* as a reflection of Stilicho's unitary propaganda and ambitions in both parts of the empire.

25. Cf. Demandt, *RE Suppl.* XII: 615; Clemente, *La "Notitia Dignitatum,"* p. 171.

26. Cf. the complex classification of fourth-century titles in Ensslin, *Klio* XXIII (1930): 306-25.

27. Seeck, *Regesten*, pp. 300, 308-10; *PLRE* I: 856.

28. The names are listed by Zos. 5. 32. Cf. Jones, *Later Roman Empire* I: 344; Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, p. 281.

29. Zos. 5. 34. 1 indicates that in the year of his death Stilicho had a Hunnish bodyguard; cf. Diesner, *Klio* LIV (1972): 331 f. Stilicho's concern that these private armies should not become excessively large at the expense of the army of the state is reflected in *Cod. Theod.* 7. 13. 16, of 406, which would have had the effect of severely limiting their size.

30. Jones, *Later Roman Empire* I: 326-28.

31. Cf. Mazzarino, *Stilicone*, pp. 106-13; Straub, *Regeneratio imperii*, pp. 222, 229-33.

32. Cf. Mazzarino, *Stilicone*, pp. 108 f. This use of "parens," as inaugurated by Stilicho, is also to be distinguished from the use of the word as a polite form employed by emperors in addressing important officials such as the urban and praetorian prefects, and attested from the early fourth century; cf. Straub, *Regeneratio imperii*, p. 230.

33. The attribution to him of this title by the later writers Jordanes (*Get.* 154) and Landulf Sag. (13, *passim*) is due to their realization that he was the forerunner of Constantius, Aetius, and Ricimer; cf. Picotti, *ASI*, ser. 7, IX (1928): 40.

The same can be said for a similar attribution by the author of the *Liber promissionum et praedictorum Dei* (3. 38. 43), whose significance is discussed by Mazzarino, *Stilicone*, pp. 110 f. Had Stilicho used this term, one could surely have expected it to occur among his other titles in the inscriptions discussed in the course of this chapter.

Chapter 3

1. Mommsen, *Ges. Schr.* IV: 528; Seeck, *Untergang V*: 270 f.; Demougeot, *De l'unité*, p. 104.

2. Esp. by Cameron in his *Claudian*.

3. Mazzarino, *Stilicone*, p. 288.

4. CIL VI: 1730 (ILS, no. 1277), of the year 398; CIL VI: 1731 (ILS, no. 1278), of 406. Cf. Cameron, *Claudian*, p. 56; Demougeot, *De l'unité*, p. 37, n. 108.

5. III Cons. Hon. 145-50; Nupt. 220 f.; Bell. Gild. 291 f.

6. On Richomeres, see PLRE I: 765 f.; Promotus, *ibid.*, p. 750; Timasius, *ibid.*, p. 914.

7. Claudian's role as propagandist has been explored in depth by Cameron in his *Claudian*; but cf. Gnllka, *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* X (1976): 96-124 and *Gnomon* XLIX (1977): 26-51, who cautions against reading Claudian exclusively in this light. See also Döpp, *Zeitgeschichte in Dichtungen Claudians*, pp. 13 ff. ("Claudians politische Gedichte haben Rang und Bedeutung offizieller Dokumente, ohne doch solche zu sein," p. 17).

8. In Ruf. 1. 308-22; Cons. Stil. 1. 94-115.

9. Theodosius had, on the instigation of Rufinus, posted Promotus in Thrace, where he was ambushed and killed by the Bastarnae in 391. For the accusation that Rufinus instigated the barbarians to kill Promotus, see Zos. 4. 51; cf. Demougeot, "Le préfet Rufin", pp. 185 ff., esp. p. 188.

10. Cons. Stil. 1. 94-115. Cameron (*Claudian*, p. 150) feels that the earlier account written in 396, a time when Stilicho badly needed a victory behind him, credits him with a greater victory than does the second version, dating to 400, after he had derived considerable prestige from his handling of the Gildo affair. Surely, however, the second account offers even more specific hints of a

great slaughter of barbarians than does the first. This aspect of the operation is played up as the event recedes in time. Cf. also Hoffmann, *Das spättrömische Bewegungsheer* I: 517, who counsels against underestimating the importance of this campaign.

11. In *Ruf.* 2. 124–25; Demougeot, *De l'unité*, pp. 151 ff. The amount of specific information that Claudian divulges on this expedition and that of 397 is very scant. Other sources of information are Zos. 5. 7 and John Ant. frg. 190, who both epitomize Eunapius and who both compress the two expeditions into one. The not very copious information from these two sources is sorted out by Cameron, *Claudian*, appendix C. On the compression by Zosimus of the two expeditions into one, see also Costanzi, *Bollettino della società Pavese* IV (1904): 489, n. 2; Hoffmann, *Das spättrömische Bewegungsheer* I: 33 f. Hoffmann (p. 31) feels that the real reason for Stilicho's expedition of 395 was to take control of Constantinople; the need to protect the Balkans from barbarian raids and to return the eastern troops was merely an excuse.

12. Cf. Cameron, *Claudian*, pp. 66, 88 ff., 159 ff., and chap. 3, *passim*.

13. Cf. Cameron, *Claudian*, pp. 161 ff., where attention is also drawn to a passage in *Bell. Gild.* (293 ff.) in which Theodosius, addressing Arcadius in a dream, admits that when he died he left the troops in a state of considerable turbulence due to the rancor of the civil war, and credits Stilicho with having kept them under control. Cf. also *Cons. Stil.* 1. 148 ff., 162 ff.

14. Cf. Hoffman, *Das spättrömische Bewegungsheer* I: 30; II: 11 f. (nn. 41 f.)

15. Cf. above, n. 11.

16. Our sources (*PLRE* I: 780) are simply not explicit or reliable enough to enable us to decide with reasonable certainty about this; see Costanzi, *Bollettino della società Pavese* IV (1904): 494; Cameron, *Claudian*, pp. 90 ff.; but cf. Albert, *Chiron* IX (1979): 635. It should be remembered that Rufinus was widely hated in the East, and also that both Gainas and Eutropius profited at least as much as did Stilicho from Rufinus's death (cf. Bayless, "Political Unity," pp. 12 f.); as Albert (*op. cit.*, pp. 634 ff.) points out, Gainas was working entirely for himself after his arrival in the East.

17. Cameron, *Claudian*, pp. 161–68.

18. *IV Cons. Hon.* 439–59; *Cons. Stil.* 1. 188–240. Cf. *In Eutr.* 1.378 ff. See Döpp, *Zeitgeschichte in Dichtungen Claudians*, p. 103, n. 5; p. 179, n. 12.

19. *Cod. Theod.* 7. 18. 9.

20. Claudian says: “Post otia Galli / limitis hortaris Graias fulcire ruinas” (IV *Cons. Hon.* 459 f.), speaking of Honorius’s instructions to Stilicho. Had there been any invitation from Arcadius, Claudian would surely have played this up. Stilicho’s excuse for his present action was presumably his claimed tutorship of Arcadius.

21. Gnlika, *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* X (1976): 105, and *Gnomon* XLIX (1977): 35 f., considers this practice of suddenly changing the subject to be part of the “darstellerische Technik” of Claudian. The poet pursues an historical event up to what he sees as the high point, then breaks off sharply, leaving us with a vivid impression; we should not have expected a detailed account of the battle because it lies outside Claudian’s artistic interest. Gnlika seems to miss the fact that what arouses suspicion in Cameron and others is not Claudian’s failure to divulge one particular piece of information, but rather a certain pattern that pervades his entire presentation of Stilicho’s career. It is possible, as Gnlika does, to isolate each detail in this pattern and argue that it could mean something other than what Cameron proposes; but this does not constitute a refutation of the whole.

22. Zos. 5. 7. 2-3. Cf. Cameron, *Claudian*, appendix C, where it is demonstrated that these details refer to the 397 expedition.

23. On the sources used by Zosimus, and their responsibility for the two sharply opposing views he takes of Stilicho, see Goffart, *AHR* LXXVI (1971): 418 f. (but cf. Paschoud, ed., Zos. 3-4, intro., p. x, n. 2); Paschoud, *RE* XA: 810-25; Ridley, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* LXV (1972): 280-83. Costanzi, *Bollettino della società Pavese* IV (1904): 489, n. 2, proposed that at this point Zosimus might have been using the summary prooemium of Olympiodorus, rather than Eunapius; if this is so, the version he gives is even more credible, and this could also explain the absence of the stock charge of treachery.

24. In *Eutr.* 2. 199 ff.; *Bell. Goth.* 611 ff. Cf. Cameron, *Claudian*, p. 170.

25. Cameron, *Claudian*, p. 171.

26. They are weighed up and criticized by Cameron, *ibid.*, pp. 172-75. The theories of the nineteenth century are similarly demolished by Costanzi, *Bollettino della società Pavese* IV (1904): 495-502, who is inclined to attach importance to Zosimus’s version though not drawing any far-reaching conclusions from it. More recently, Gnlika, *Gnomon* XLIX (1977): 38, still takes at face value the allegation in *Claud. Bell. Goth.* 516f. that Stilicho would have wiped out Alaric in Arcadia had it not been for some intervention by the East

to save him. Döpp, *Zeitgeschichte in Dichtungen Claudians*, pp. 106 ff., argues for a pact between Stilicho and Alaric.

27. Claud. *Bell. Gild.* 153-55; but cf. Oost, *CP* LVII (1962): 27-30; Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, p. 179; *PLRE* I: 395 f.

28. On the background and circumstances of the final conflict, see Diesner, *Klio* XL (1962): 178-86; Kotula, *Das Altertum* XVIII (1972): 167-72.

29. Bayless, "Political Unity," pp. 16 f. Significantly, Claudian's *Bell. Gild.* reflects a very conciliatory attitude toward Eutropius; later, after Stilicho's successful conclusion of this affair, and after Eutropius's "encroachment" upon the military sphere in command of the same eastern troops that had once been under Stilicho's command, Claudian is authorized to cut loose with the ferocious invective of *In Eutr.* I; cf. Albert, *Chiron* IX (1979): 622, 637 ff.

30. Claud. *Cons. Stil.* 1. 325-32; *Symm. Ep.* 4. 5; Cristo, *Atene e Roma*, n.s., XXI (1976): 53 f.; but cf. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, pp. 268 f.

31. *Cons. Stil.* 1. 364-68. On the contrast between the two poems, see Oleschowska, *Museum Helveticum* XXXI (1974): 47 f. Cf. *CIL* VI: 1730 (*ILS*, no. 1277), where Stilicho claims credit for the victory in Africa.

32. *Prosp. s.a.* 400; Cassiod. *Chron. s.a.* 400.

33. *Bell. Goth.* 278-414. This Rhaetian campaign and the possible connection with Radagaisus is a matter of very considerable dispute; the best summary to date of scholarly opinion is given by Demougeot, *De l'unité*, pp. 268-73, esp. n. 191. See also Várady, *Das letzte Jahrhundert Pannoniens*, pp. 180 ff., but cf. Nagy, *A. Ant. Hung.* XIX (1971): 330 ff.; Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, p. 273.

34. *Cons. Ital.* s.a. 401; cf. Demougeot, *De l'unité*, p. 269, n. 195. On the topographical aspects of the invasion, see Wolfram, *Geschichte der Goten*, pp. 178 ff.

35. On the controversy as to the dating of the Battle of Verona and the activities of Alaric between Pollentia and Verona, see Baynes, *JRS* XII (1922): 207-10; Demougeot, *De l'unité*, pp. 278 f.; Barnes, *AJP* XCVII (1976): 373 ff.

36. Modern opinion on the dating of Pollentia is assembled by Christiansen, *TAPA* XCVII (1966): 47, n. 10. See also Barnes, *AJP* XCVII (1976): 374.

37. Cassiod. *Chron. s.a.* 402; *Jord. Get.* 30. In addition to Claudian, the partial Prudentius (c. *Symm.* 2. 696-744) declares it a Roman victory. *Oros.* 7. 37. 2 says:

“pugnantes vicimus, victores victi sumus.” Similarly, Prosp. s.a. 402 (“Pollentiae adversus Gothos vehementer utriusque partis clade pugnatum est”) implies some sort of drawn battle; cf. also Jerome *Ep.* 107. 2. 3, who, however, does not refer to any specific battle. The majority of modern scholars take the view that a Roman victory at Pollentia was not exploited by Stilicho. References have been assembled most recently by Christiansen, *TAPA* XCVII (1966): 47, n. 12.

38. Cf. Mommsen, *Ges. Schr.* IV: 528, n. 6.

39. Claudian can afford to admit this a few years later in *VI Cons. Hon.* 281–86, after the victory of Verona has been won.

40. *Ibid.*, 201 ff. The few scraps of concrete information are sorted out by Demougeot, *De l'unité*, p. 280, esp. n. 272.

41. The questions of an agreement between Stilicho and Alaric and of Stilicho's ambitions in Illyricum are discussed in Chapter 4. That Stilicho deliberately chose to spare Alaric when he might have crushed him is even more unlikely when Alaric is on Italian soil than it was in 395 and 397; but cf. Döpp, *Zeitgeschichte in Dichtungen Claudians*, pp. 225 ff.

42. Cf. Cameron, *Claudian*, pp. 415 ff.

43. On the dispute concerning the dating of this invasion, see Baynes, *JRS* XII (1922): 217–19; Demougeot, *De l'unité*, p. 354, n. 7. For a consideration of the scanty source material on the invasion, see Demougeot, *ibid.*, pp. 354–60. On the composition of Radagaisus's horde, see G. Alföldy., *Antiquitas*, ser. 4, vol. 3 (1966): 13, n. 50.

44. Zos. 5. 26 says thirty *!ariumoſi*, which might amount to less than 20,000 *comitatenses*; cf. Bury, *Later Roman Empire* I: 168.

45. This is reflected also in Oros. 7. 37. 12, who remarks, in connection with Faesulae, “Adsunt Uldin et Sarus, Hunorum et Gothorum duces, praesidio Romanorum.” Interesting also is Olympiodorus's information (frg. 9) that after defeating them Stilicho made allies of the best of Radagaisus's Goths, the *optimates*; cf. Várady, *Das letzte Jahrhundert Pannoniens*, pp. 194 ff., 198 f.

46. Paul. Nola. *Carm.* 21. 1–34. The inscriptions are collected by Demougeot, *De l'unité*, pp. 360 f.

47. The final scene of Stilicho's life is related in Zos. 5. 32–34.

Chapter 4

1. The situation certainly seems to have caused anxiety to Serena, more aware than her husband of the danger of the opposition. In the final stages she strove to stave off the catastrophe; cf. Zos. 5. 28-30; Demougeot, *Byzantion* XX (1950): 35-37, and *De l'unité*, pp. 372-75, 402; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, p. 79. It may well have been Serena who recommended to Stilicho the abandonment, in the last year of his life, of his liberal religious policies; certainly a group of laws (*Cod. Theod.* 16. 2, 38, 16. 5. 41, 16. 5. 43, 16. 10. 13 [cf. *Constitutio Sirmondiana* 12, in the Mommsen ed. of *Cod. Theod.*, vol. I: 916 f.]) dating to 15 November 407 seem designed to placate the pious and the orthodox, among whose number was Honorius himself. On these laws see Demougeot, *Revue historique de droit français et étranger*, 1950, pp. 403-12. Augustine (*Ep.* 97. 2, 3) refers to laws against pagans and heretics, passed in Stilicho's lifetime, though he is unwilling to give Stilicho credit for them. It was probably during this "orthodox" phase of Stilicho's career that he burned the Sibylline books, to the great outrage of Rutilius Namatianus (*De reditu suo* 2. 51-56); cf. Demougeot, *REA* LIV (1952): 89 ff; G. Alföldy, *Antiquitas*, ser. 4, vol. 3 (1966): 12-19. For a general discussion of scholarly views on Stilicho's religious policies, see Döpp, *Zeitgeschichte in Dichtungen Claudians*, pp. 26ff.

2. Cf. Chapter 3, n. 22.

3. Cf. Mommsen, *Ges. Schr.* IV: 516 f.

4. Kornemann, *Doppelprinzipat*, pp. 143-45. Cf. Cameron, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* LXXIII (1969): 249. On the ages of Arcadius and Honorius, see Mazzarino, *Stilicone*, p. 104, nn. 2-3. As a more extreme example, Theodosius II was admitted as a colleague of Arcadius and Honorius on 10 January 402, when only one year old (Stein, *Bas-Empire* I: 246, 549, esp. n. 135).

5. In western inscriptions, the usurper Eugenius is also recognized (Kornemann, *Doppelprinzipat*, p. 145).

6. Cf. Paribeni, *Da Diocleziano alla caduta dell' impero d'occidente*, p. 232. The very fact that these two shadow emperors enjoyed comparatively long reigns and died natural deaths is a proof of how far the originally alien dynastic principle had progressed in the Roman Empire. Later emperors, who did not enjoy this dynastic privilege, were set up and pulled down with little ceremony by the wielders of real power, the successors of Stilicho.

7. *Ges. Schr.* IV: 516, n. 2.

8. *De ob. Theod.* 5. Ambrose speaks of promised tax remissions; there were several of Theodosius's wishes that Ambrose very much wanted to see implemented and he betrays some anxiety that this may not be done. Cf. Straub, *Regeneratio imperii*, pp. 224 ff.

9. "Theodosius the Great and the Regency of Stilicho," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* LXXIII (1969): 247–80. A more superficial treatment is that of Lippold, *RE Suppl.* XIII (1973): 910 f., who tends to take Stilicho's claims at face value, and argues that Theodosius must have intended Stilicho's guardianship to extend also to Arcadius since he wished both parts of the empire to develop together and not separately; cf. Rauschen, *Jahrbücher*, pp. 431, 446; Döpp, *Zeitgeschichte in Dichtungen Claudians*, pp. 63 ff.

10. Cameron, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

11. Except for the one passing reference to Stilicho as "parens," Ambrose does not mention him in this speech; he seems to be concerned with other matters, especially that he himself should be able to exercise an influence over the young Honorius, to whom the entire speech is addressed. There is no evidence that he was ever a keen supporter of Stilicho, and he probably had little inclination to increase the latter's prestige; cf. Palanque, *Saint Ambroise*, pp. 304 f. For the relations between Ambrose and Stilicho, *ibid.*, pp. 308–12; Dudden, *St. Ambrose*, pp. 486 f., 490.

12. Cf. Cameron, *op. cit.*, p. 275 f.; Straub, *Regeneratio imperii*, pp. 228 f.

13. Oros. 7. 37. 1 predictably disbelieves Stilicho. Olympiod. frg. 2 believes him, and this is reflected in the later part of Zosimus's history (5. 34) for which his source was Olympiodorus.

14. Theodor Birt, in the preface to his edition of *Claudii Claudiani carmina*, *MGH: AA X*: xxviii, dismisses Stilicho's claims in no uncertain terms: "Concluditur hunc ducem ne ipsum quidem ante interfectum Rufinum id ausum esse, ut ambitioni suae scitam de postremis verbis Theodosii fabulam praetenderet." As Rauschen points out (*Jahrbücher*, pp. 445–47), earlier nineteenth-century scholars tended to take a similarly severe view of Stilicho's role in this matter.

15. So, Straub, *Regeneratio imperii*, p. 229; cf. *ibid.* pp. 238 f. Gnlika's objection (*Gnomon* XLIX [1977]: 34) to interpreting this passage of Claudian as a restriction of Stilicho's claim is not convincing; in reality, Stilicho may or may not have been thinking of Arcadius at this moment, but, given the viewpoint that Claudian dutifully adopts every time he refers to the dying Theodosius's

wishes, it is striking that he fails to mention Arcadius on this occasion (cf. Döpp, *Zeitgeschichte in Dichtungen Claudians*, pp. 65 f.). Bayless, “Political Unity,” pp. 23–28, musters evidence for a short period of East-West harmony around 401 (he feels that Alaric’s attack on Italy in that year was entirely spontaneous and was in no way instigated by the East), and suggests that this may be linked with a renunciation by Stilicho at this time of his eastern claims; but cf. Christiansen, *Historia* XIX (1970): 113–20, who argues that East-West relations were deteriorating steadily from 399.

16. It seems that Honorius and Serena may have intervened directly to block this scheme; cf. Zos. 5. 29. 8; Sozom. 8. 25, 9. 4. It was presumably around the same time that Stilicho ordered a blockade of the Eastern Empire and cut maritime communications between the two parts (cf. *Cod. Theod.* 7. 16. 1).

17. *Ges. Schr.* IV: 525–27.

18. Stein, *Bas-Empire* I: 229, 540; Demougeot, *De l’unité*, p. 160, esp. n. 213 with bibliography.

19. This view, proposed by Grumel, *Revue des études byzantines* IX (1951): 23 f., has been endorsed by Hoffman, *Das spätrömische Bewegungsheer* II: 207–15; Cameron, *Claudian*, pp. 59 ff. Cf. Grumel, op. cit., p. 5, n. 1.

20. Cf. Mazzarino, *Stilicone*, pp. 60 ff.

21. Mazzarino (ibid., pp. 66 ff.) proposes the interesting theory that the reason why Stilicho finally decided he needed eastern Illyricum was to sacrifice the area to Alaric in order to save Pannonia and ultimately Italy; in other words, he would get rid of Alaric by pushing him back toward the East, just as the East had earlier pushed him toward the West. This would accord well with Stilicho’s desire, which Mazzarino sees as a virtue, to preserve Alaric as a potential ally even at the cost of atrocious suffering and destruction within the empire.

22. A good example is Bury, *Later Roman Empire* I: 172 f.

23. *Untergang* V: 273 f., 548 f.

24. Cf. Demougeot, *De l’unité*, pp. 108 f., 117. It has been suggested that the Visigothic invasion of Greece should be viewed not so much as a revolt, but rather as a quest for a more secure dwelling place, the Huns having invaded across the lower Danube (Nagy, *A. Ant. Hung.*, XIX [1971]: 326 ff.; Demougeot, *REA* LXXV [1973]: 206). This would explain why Stilicho was so anxious to help Arcadius’s government and make a new foedus with Alaric.

One cannot, then, agree with Wolfram (*Geschichte der Goten*, p. 164), who suggests that neither Romans nor Visigoths wished to maintain the foedus of 382 and that both sides had been preparing for a break.

25. It was, as Cameron argues (*Claudian*, p. 185), no more than a safe-conduct out of Italy for Alaric. For a discussion of theories dating a major agreement between Stilicho and Alaric to 402, see Demougeot, *De l'unité*, pp. 365 f.

26. Cameron (*Claudian*, pp. 177–80) has effectively demolished the theory of some sort of pact between Stilicho and Alaric in the period between 395 and 401.

27. Eastern connivance in Alaric's invasion of Italy is generally assumed by scholars, but is strongly contested by Bayless, "Political Unity," pp. 26–28 and *Classical Journal* LXXII (1976): 65–67. He points to an improvement in relations between Rome and Constantinople at just this time, remarking that in 399 and 400 Stilicho refused to recognize the eastern consul, but recognized him in 401, and in 402 Arcadius and Honorius were consuls together for the first time since 396. Such a détente, however, would not necessarily deter either side from seizing an opportunity to seriously weaken the other and rid itself of a chronic nuisance.

28. Cf. Grumel, *Revue des études byzantines* IX (1951): 42 f.; Stein, *Bas-Empire* I: 249, 551; Cameron, *Claudian*, pp. 157 f. Demougeot, however, argues strongly for late 406 (*Byzantion* XX [1950]: 33 f.; *De l'unité*, pp. 363–69).

29. On this stormy meeting of the senate, and, in general, on Stilicho's relations with the senatorial class, see Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, pp. 264, 275–79.

30. Stilicho must have known for some time that Gaul was being ravaged; cf. Demougeot, *De l'unité*, p. 374, n. 121.

31. Cf. *Cod. Theod.* 9. 42. 22, passed by Honorius on 22 November 408. For the ancient sources on the accusation of treachery, see Ruggini, *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* IV (1968): 440 f. The four principal western sources—Jerome, Augustine, Orosius, and Rutilius Namatianus—are discussed by Várady, *A. Ant. Hung.* XVI (1968): 413–32 and *Das letzte Jahrhundert Pannoniens*, pp. 475 ff.

32. Cf. Oost, *Galla Placidia*, pp. 75 f.; Várady, *A. Ant. Hung.* XVI (1968): 413 ff., 432.

33. Bury, *Later Roman Empire* I: 172 f.; Seeck, *Untergang* V: 273. Equally unhistorical, of course, is the view that the fault is to be laid at Rufinus's door. Cf. the criticisms of Mazzarino, *Stilicone*, pp. 250 ff.

34. Cf. Pavan, *Politica gotica*, pp. 49-55; Dagron, *Travaux et mémoires* III (1968): 92-112.

35. The modern equivalent of this view might be exemplified by the verdict of Piganiol, who calls it a “politique désastreuse” (*L’ Empire chrétien*, p. 211); cf. Jones, *Later Roman Empire* I: 157. On the dilemma of Theodosius and Stilicho, and on the uneasiness of contemporaries in the face of the progressive barbarization of the empire, see most recently Cameron, *Claudian*, pp. 370-77. That Theodosius, however, in the decade following Adrianople, simply had no short-term alternative to a policy of conciliation with the Goths (whatever might be its ultimate consequences) has been amply demonstrated by Hoffmann, *Das spätrömische Bewegungsheer* I: 447-68.

36. Jones, *Later Roman Empire* I: 157.

37. Pavan, *Politica gotica*, p. 81; cf. Daly, *Historia* XXI (1972): 374 ff.

38. *Later Roman Empire* I: 172 f.

39. Várady, *A. Ant. Hung.* XVI (1968): 172 f.

40. *Roma aeterna*, p. 135. Cf. Demougeot’s “C’était un homme de bonne volonté, mais sans imagination, ni initiative,” (*De l’unité*, p. 141), and her general summing up of Stilicho on pp. 139-42.

41. Zos. 5. 32. Cf. also Oros. 7. 38. 5.

42. *Cod. Theod.* 9. 42. 22. Cf. Ruggini, *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* IV (1968): 433.

43. The sources are examined by Ruggini, *op. cit.*, p. 434; Demougeot, *De l’unité*, pp. 414 f.

44. Cf. Ruggini, *op. cit.*, p. 435, n. 12.

45. Cf. Oost, *Galla Placidia*, p. 66; Cameron, *Claudian*, p. 153, n. 1.

46. On Stilicho’s possible (and not at all unreasonable) ambitions for Eucherius, see Cameron, *Claudian*, pp. 46-49, 154; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, pp. 71-74, 81; Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, pp. 52-54.

47. Zos. 5. 34. 7; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, p. 73, esp. n. 117. The only information on his age is in Claud. *Cons. Stil.* 3. 176 ff., which describes him as a baby in 389.

48. *PLRE* I: 857.

49. Oost, *Galla Placidia*, pp. 73 f.; Mazzolani, *Galla Placidia*, p. 25.

50. *PLRE* I: 857. Zosimus (5. 28) seems to indicate that Stilicho was opposed to this marriage of Thermantia, but consented to it on pressure from Serena; on possible motives, cf. Mazzarino, *Serena e le due Eudossie*, pp. 13 f.

51. Cameron, *Claudian*, pp. 53 f., suggests that Claud. *Nupt.* 339 (“aurea sic videat similes Thermantia taedas”) may hint at an ambition of Stilicho to induce Arcadius to divorce Eudoxia, his wife since 395, and marry Thermantia. Gnlika, *Gnomon* XLIX (1977): 35, is surely right in his view that Cameron is reading too much into this verse.

52. Magnentius in 350–53; Silvanus in 355. *PLRE* I: 532, 840 f.; Waas, *Germanen im römischen Dienst*, pp. 16 ff., 88 ff., 105 ff. In general, on the disinclination of Germans to become emperor, see Straub, *Vom Herrscherideal*, pp. 72 ff. and Waas, op. cit., pp. 18 ff.

Chapter 5

1. Upon his elevation by Alaric, Attalus promptly made the Visigothic king *magister utriusque militiae* (Zos. 6. 7. 2; Sozom. 9. 8. 2).

2. Olympiod. frgs. 17, 19. Cf. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, pp. 313–15.

3. Stevens, *Athenaeum*, n.s., XXV (1957): 343, n. 159. There is some uncertainty about the circumstances of Gerontius's revolt of 409 (or 411); see Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders* I: 825, n. 1; Seeck, *Untergang* VI: 44, 392; idem., *RE* VII: 1270; Demougeot, *De l'unité*, p. 454, n. 71; and especially Stevens, op. cit., for the difficult chronology of these events.

4. On his origin and early career, see Olympiod. frg. 39; Oros. 7. 42. 2; Oost, *CP* LXI (1966): 238. Demougeot (*De l'unité*, p. 464, n. 124) remarks, without further qualification, that his career under Stilicho must have been obscure; this would be true only insofar as Stilicho's special concentration of power kept every other Roman commander in the shade, but Stilicho certainly did not dispense with subordinates, nor, as Oost points out (*ibid.*), could every one of his associates have been liquidated in 408 without bringing the government to a standstill.

5. Prosp. s.a.; Oros. 7. 42. 3; Sozom. 9. 14. Demougeot dates the appointment to the first half of August 410 (*De l'unité*, p. 464, n. 124); for other views, Oost, *CP* LXI (1966): 238, nn. 13 f.; Demandt, *RE* Suppl. XII: 629.

6. Sozom. 9. 14; Olympiod. frg. 16. On magister equitum praesentalis, see Ensslin, *Klio* XXIV (1931): 471; Lippold, *RE* IXA: 1: 531 f.; Jones, *Later Roman Empire* I: 177. On magister equitum per Gallias, see Demandt, *RE* Suppl. XII: 643.

7. *Cod. Theod.* 7. 18. 16. Cf. Demandt, *RE* Suppl. XII: 639 f.

8. On the controversy over Sarus, see Demandt, *ibid.*, pp. 637-39, 643.

9. See p. 19 in this volume.

10. Jones, *Later Roman Empire* I: 106. Cf. Picotti, *ASI*, ser. 7, IX (1928): 3-35; Ensslin, *Mélanges Bidez*, pp. 361-76; Heil, *Der konstantinische Patriziat*; Demandt, *RE* Suppl. XII: 631 f., with further bibliography.

11. Petronius: Amm. Marc. 26. 6. 7; *Cod. Theod.* 7. 23. 7. Eutropius: Seeck, *RE* VI: 1521. Rufinus: *PLRE* I: 780; but cf. Picotti, *ASI*, ser. 7, IX (1928): 38 and Barnes, *Phoenix* XXIX (1975): 157.

12. *PLRE* II: 623 f. Cf. Picotti, *ASI*, ser. 7, IX (1928): 41 f.; Stein, *Bas-Empire* I: 257-59.

13. Cf. Picotti, *ASI*, ser. 7, IX (1928): 43; Ensslin, *Klio* XXIV (1931): 496-502; Heil, *Der konstantinische Patriziat*, pp. 30 f. Sometimes the actual name of the incumbent is simply omitted, his authority being such that he could not be confused with any other patricius. Sirago (*Galla Placidia*, p. 275) calls him a kind of vice-emperor.

14. He is first mentioned as a patrician in the address of *Cod. Theod.* 15. 14. 14 of 1 March 416. On the dating of this appointment, see Demandt, *RE* Suppl. XII: 630 f.

15. Ensslin, *Klio* XXIV (1931): 472-74; but cf. Demandt, *loc. cit.*

16. The words of Olympiod. frg. 34 are quite strong: “Ὁνώριος ἄκουσαν λαβὼν ἐγγχειρίζει παραδιδούς Κωνσταντίῳ.”

17. *MGH: Ep.*, III: 15, line 1.

18. Olympiod. frg. 23.

19. *Idem.*, frg. 34; *CIL* XIII: 3674 (*ILS*, no. 8992).

20. Oost, *Galla Placidia*, pp. 161 f., with discussion of sources and dating.

21. Olympiod. frg. 34; Philostorg. 12. 12. That this almost certainly took place some time before the raising of Constantius to the emperorship, see Ensslin, *RE* XX (1950): 1917; cf. Oost, *Galla Placidia*, p. 163.

22. *Coll. Avell.* ep. 32; cf. ep. 29. Cf. Picotti, *ASI*, ser. 7, IX (1928): 44; Demandt, *RE Suppl.* XII: 633.

23. *CIL* VI: 1719 (*ILS*, no. 801).

24. Sources: Seeck, *RE* IV (1901): 1101 f.

25. For the details of the ecclesiastical dispute, see Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, pp. 231–33; on the strained relations between East and West at this time, see also Bayless, “Political Unity,” pp. 60–62; Lippold, *RE Suppl.* XIII: 970 f.

26. Olympiod. frg. 34.

27. *Ibid.* Olympiod. frg. 23 refers to his tendency to be witty and play the clown at parties.

28. Cf. Hodgkin: “Every step which he took in the purple buskins of royalty was prescribed by the tedious court ceremonial invented by Diocletian, and perfected by the eunuchs of an earlier Constantius. His health began to give way, and, like many men of high animal spirits, he fell an easy prey to nervous depression” (*Italy and Her Invaders* I: 843).

29. It is clear that the forceful Placidia exercised considerable influence over Constantius in the years between their marriage and his death; cf. Oost, *Galla Placidia*, chap. 4, *passim*.

30. Constantius’s projected hostilities against the East in the last phase of his career cannot be regarded as an attempt to extend his sway to the other half of the empire.

31. Olympiod. frg. 8; Philostorg. 12. 1. On the uncertain dating of this event, see Oost, *CP* LXI (1966): 238 f.

32. *PLRE* II: 540.

33. Oost, *CP* LXI (1966): 236–42. Note, however, that Heraclian was killed on 7 March 413 (*Ann. Rav.* s.a.). Sirago (*Galla Placidia*, pp. 188–92) proposes the less likely explanation that Olympius was executed after Heraclian’s revolt as a punishment for having supported it, and ascribes to Heraclian motives of personal ambition and discontentment. Cf. Kotula, *Antiquités africaines* XI (1977): 257–66.

34. Demougeot, *De l’unité*, p. 498; cf. p. 413.

35. Cf. the repressive *Cod. Theod.* 16. 5. 51, 56, dating from the early part of Constantius’s supremacy; Demougeot, *De l’unité*, p. 464, n. 125. On Stilicho’s religious policies, Mazzolani, *Galla Placidia*, p. 79.

36. Cf. Oros. 7. 42. 2; Sozom. 9. 16. But his orthodoxy was not above wanting to make use of the magician Libanius (Olympiod. frg. 38).

37. *Cod. Theod.* 14. 10. 4, of December 416. Cf. Seeck, *Untergang VI*: 39; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, p. 114.

38. Cf. Demougeot, *De l'unité*, p. 465.

39. *Galla Placidia*, p. 112. For a discussion of other scholarly opinion on this move, *ibid.*, p. 111, n. 90; p. 115, n. 112.

40. *Ibid.*, pp. 115-19.

41. Oros. 7. 43. 13-15; Stein, *Bas-Empire I*: 267, 559, esp. n. 66; Wolfram, *Geschichte der Goten*, pp. 205 f.

42. Oros. 7. 43. 4-7; Oost, *CP LXIII* (1968): 114-21.

43. There are no grounds for supposing, as does Sirago (*Galla Placidia*, p. 201), that Constantius's friendly policy toward barbarians after his marriage with Placidia was owing to her having made such a policy a condition of agreeing to the marriage.

44. On the settlements in Gaul and Spain, see Lot, *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire VII* (1928): 1005 ff.; Stein, *Bas-Empire I*: 267-69; Demougeot, *De l'unité*, pp. 502 f., 512 f.; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, pp. 151-55; Wolfram, *Geschichte der Goten*, pp. 208 ff.; Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans*, chap. 4, *passim* (cf. below, chap. 9, n. 59). Thompson, in *JRS XLVI* (1956): 65-75 and *Historia XII* (1963): 118-22, has developed a theory that the reason for the settlement of the Visigoths in Aquitaine, a rich agricultural area not exposed to barbarian threat, was to protect it against the *Bacaudae* of Brittany; a somewhat different view is expressed by Wallace-Hadrill, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library XLIV* (1961): 213-37, esp. pp. 214-22. Cf. also Bachrach, *Traditio XXV* (1969): 354 ff.

Chapter 6

1. Frigeridus ap. Greg. Tur. *HF* 2. 9. For basic information on the career of Castinus, see Seeck, *RE III*: 1761 f.; *PLRE II*: 269 f. See also Oost, *Galla Placidia*, pp. 170-82 *passim*, 190; Wilkes, *Phoenix XXVI* (1972): 387-91.

2. On chronology, see Oost, *Galla Placidia*, p. 172, n. 10. On the subject of his rank, see Ensslin, *Klio XXIV* (1931): 474 f.; Demandt, *RE Suppl. XII*: 635 f.

3. Pseud. Bon. *Ep.* 10; Pseud. August. *Ep.* 11 (but on the historical usefulness of these forgeries see now Clover, “The Pseudo Boniface and the *Historia Augusta*,” esp. pp. 83 ff.); Prosp. 1278, s.a. 422; Hydat. 77. Cf. Salv. *Gub. Dei* 7. 45 f.; Olympiod. frg. 40. On Boniface’s role, see De Lepper, *De Rebus Gestis Bonifatii*, pp. 28 ff.; for a recent and thorough bibliography on Boniface, see Clover, “Geiseric the Statesman,” p. 17, n. 1.

4. Seeck, *Regesten*, p. 349. Cf. Oost, *Galla Placidia*, p. 179, n. 35.

5. On John’s career, see PLRE II: 594 f. Oost wonders why Castinus did not ascend the throne himself, but chose instead to be kingmaker. Surely the choice of John to be the figurehead successor of Honorius shows that Castinus was well aware that power resided in the soldiery, not in the purple, and that the two were no longer easily compatible. The experiment of Constantius in taking the purple has to be viewed as an aberration at this time.

6. In addition, Constantius was posthumously recognized as Augustus. Frigeridus ap. Greg. Tur. *HF* 2. 8; Olympiod. frg. 46; Marcell. s.a. 424; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, pp. 182 f.; Wilkes, *Phoenix* XXVI (1972): 389.

7. Frigeridus ap. Greg. Tur. *HF* 2. 8; Philostorg. 12. 14; Prosp. 1288, s.a. 425; *Chron. Gall.*, p. 658. Cf. Mommsen, *Ges. Schr.* IV: 534; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, pp. 189 f.

8. Philostorg. 12. 14; Mommsen, *Ges. Schr.* IV: 534; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, p. 190, n. 78.

9. Cf. Clover, *Flavius Merobaudes*, p. 30. Further on Aetius’s background and early career, Mommsen, *Ges. Schr.* IV: 532 f.; Lizerand, *Aetius*, pp. 16 f.; Bury, *Later Roman Empire* I: 241; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, pp. 212–14. Cf. also Sundwall, *Weströmische Studien*, no. 5; PLRE II: 21 ff.

10. On the interpretation of the words “a puero praetorianus” (Frigeridus ap. Greg. Tur. *HF* 2. 8), see Mommsen, *Ges. Schr.* IV: 533, n. 3, and further bibliography in Oost, *Galla Placidia*, p. 214, n. 21.

11. Frigeridus ap. Greg. Tur. *HF* 2. 8; Merob. *Carm.* 4. 42–46, *Pan.* 2. 127–43; Zos. 5. 36. 1; Demougeot, *De l’unité*, pp. 365 f.; Clover, *Flavius Merobaudes*, pp. 30, 56–58. But cf. Maenchen-Helfen, *The World of the Huns*, p. 68, n. 266, who prefers the period 402–4 or 405.

12. Frigeridus ap. Greg. Tur. *HF* 2. 8; Philostorg. 12. 14; Mommsen, *Ges. Schr.* IV: 533, n. 6. But cf. Ensslin, *Klio* XXIV (1931): 476; Demandt, *RE Suppl.* XII: 654. On the nature of these ranks, Jones, *Later Roman Empire* I: 372 f., esp. n. 16.

13. *ILS*, nos. 1293, 1298.

14. So, *inter alios*, Sundwall, *Weströmische Studien*, no. 170; Seeck, *RE* VI: 2167 f.; idem., *Untergang* VI: 114; Ensslin, *Klio*, XXIV (1931): 475 f.; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, p. 228.

15. Lizerand, *Aetius*, pp. 31 f.; Baynes, *JRS* XII (1922): 226 f.; Picotti, *ASI*, ser. 7, IX (1928): 45 f.; Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, p. 284. But cf. Oost, *Galla Placidia*, p. 228, n. 73.

16. Hydat. 84. Cf. Demandt, *RE* Suppl. XII: 653.

17. It is mentioned of the base of his statue.

18. Demandt, *RE* Suppl. XII: 662-66; Clemente, *Notitia Dignitatum*, p. 173.

19. Procop. *Vand.* 1. 3. 16-21, followed by John Ant. frg. 196 and other eastern writers, ascribes the plot to Aetius. Prosp. 1294, s.a. 427, seems to imply that Felix was responsible for the whole affair:

Bonifatio, cuius intra Africam potentia gloriaque augebatur,
bellum ad arbitrium Felicis, quia ad Italiam venire abnuerat,
publico nomine illatum est. . . .

This latter view has won the approval of most scholars; for a recent discussion, see Oost, *Galla Placidia*, pp. 220-22, esp. n. 46. For a general overview of problems concerning Boniface in Africa, see Paronetto, *Miscellanea Greca e Romana* IV (1975): 405-52.

20. Prosp. 1292, s.a. 426.

21. Prosp. 1303, s.a. 430; Hydat. 94; John Ant. frg. 201. 3. It was probably Felix who was responsible for some actions against the Huns in Pannonia in 427; cf. Marcell. s.a. 427; Jord. *Get.* 166; Seeck, *Untergang* VI: 106, 115; Nagy, *A. Ant. Hung.* XV (1967): 159-86; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, p. 212, esp. n. 8.

22. For this, and for the material that follows, the two most thorough discussions of the evidence are those of Ensslin, *Klio* XXIV (1931): 477-81, and Demandt, *RE* Suppl. XII: 654-57.

23. Cf. Paronetto, *Miscellanea Greca e Romana* IV (1975): 422 ff.

24. Prosp. 1310, s.a. 432; Hydat. 99; Marcell. s.a. 432; Procop. *Vand.* 1. 3. 14 f.; Ensslin, *Klio* XXIV (1931): 478 f. Cf. John Ant. frg. 201. 3.

25. One might also detect behind the events of these years a wish on Placidia's part to institute an arrangement comparable to that in the East in

which both *magistri praesentales* were of equal importance; cf. Sundwall, *Weströmische Studien*, p. 5.

26. Marcell. s.a. 432, 435. It is possible, however, that this is a mistaken attribution; Prosp. does not mention it, though he records the patriciate of Felix (1300, s.a. 429). Cf. Barnes, *Phoenix* XXIX (1975): 165.

27. Demandt, *RE Suppl.* XII: 670.

28. Prosp. 1310, s.a. 432; *Chron. Gall.* III; Hydat. 99; Marcell. s.a. 432; John Ant. frg. 201. The sources differ as to the exact circumstances of Boniface's death, Marcellinus ascribing it to a trick on the part of Aetius, who engaged his rival in single combat with a spear of greater than usual length; cf. De Lepper, *De Rebus Gestis Bonifatii*, pp. 101 ff.

29. This, presumably, is implied in the “*deposita potestate*” of Prosp. 1310, s.a. 432.

30. *Ann. Rav.* dates Aetius's patriciate to 5 September 435. Hydat. 103 places it in the ninth year of Valentinian's reign, i.e. 433–34, (placed s.a. 434 by Mommsen, *Chron. Min.* II: 22, but to be dated to 433 according to Courtois, *Byzantion* XXI [1951]: 52). *Ann. Rav.* is certainly the more credible source; cf. Barnes, *Phoenix* XXIX (1975): 155 ff. At this time also some portions of Pannonia were ceded to the Huns, presumably as payment for their services (Prisc. frg. 7); for a recent review of scholarly opinion on this matter, see Maenchen-Helfen, *The World of the Huns*, pp. 87 ff.

31. John Ant. frg. 201; Marcell. s.a. 432. Cf. Seeck, *Untergang* VI: 117 f.; Diesner, *Klio* LIV (1972): 341–44. On the significance of such private armies at this time, see p. 22 in this volume.

32. Bartoli, *Rendiconti della pontificia accademia romana di archeologia*, ser. 3, XXII (1946–47): 267–73; Degraffi, *Bollettino della commissione archeologica comunale di Roma* LXXII (1946–48): 33–44; *Année Épigraphique*, 1950, no. 30; Mazzarino, *Renania romana*, pp. 298 ff. and tavola I facing p. 316. Cf. Demandt, *RE Suppl.* XII: 657 f.; Clover, *Flavius Merobaudes*, pp. 38 f. On the dating (preferably to the 440s), see Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, p. 367.

33. Clover, *Flavius Merobaudes*, pp. 41 ff. On the alleged fourth consulate of Aetius, see n. 45 to chap. 7 in this volume.

34. Cf. Oost, *Galla Placidia*, p. 280; Demandt, *RE Suppl.* XII: 658.

35. In particular, no *magister militum per Gallias* is known for the period between 411 and 429; cf. Demandt, *RE Suppl.* XII: 662.

36. *Nov. Val.* 17 (8 July 445).

37. An assortment of styles of reference to Aetius is assembled by Ensslin, *Klio* XXIV (1931): 481 f.

38. The references are reviewed by Ensslin, *ibid.*, 482–86. Useful now also are the various entries in *PLRE* II.

39. Demandt, *RE* Suppl. XII, 661 f.

40. *Ibid.*, 666 f. Cf. *PLRE* II: 685.

41. Bury, *Later Roman Empire* I: 252, n. 4; Demandt, *RE* Suppl. XII: 667–70; Jones, *Later Roman Empire* I: 192, n. 44.

42. Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, p. 349, n. 2. This view is tentatively supported by Oost (*Galla Placidia*, p. 258) and Clover (*Flavius Merobaudes*, p. 36).

43. So, *inter alios*, Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, p. 349, n. 2; Clover, *Flavius Merobaudes*, p. 10, n. 32. Another attempt by Valentinian to strike at a supporter of Aetius, in this case Sigisvult, can be detected in *Nov. Val.* 11 of 13 March 443, which alters the rules of rank among senators precisely to the disadvantage of Sigisvult and to the benefit of the ambitious Petronius Maximus, who at one time had designs on Aetius's position and may have planned to murder him (*PLRE* II: 751); on the interpretation of *Nov. Val.* 11, see Barnes, *Phoenix* XXIX (1975): 158 f.; Clover, *Historia* XXVII (1978): 187 ff.

44. Stilicho: Jord. *Get.* 115, 154. Rufinus, possibly never a patrician: Jord. *Rom.* 319; Marcell. s.a. 395. Aetius, a couple of years before he actually received it: Marcell. s.a. 432, where the attribution to Boniface may also be mistaken. Cf. John Ant. frg. 201. 4, where both uses of the term are clear, as demonstrated by Barnes, *Phoenix* XXIX (1975): 156 f. Other possible instances are in Demandt, *RE* Suppl. XII: 662.

45. *Pan Lat.* I, frg. 2a. 3–5. Løyen (*REA* LXXIV (1972): 155) suggests two possible translations for these words: “au titre d’une très grande dignité” or “de la plus grande dignité”; an honorary consulate is a reasonable possibility, cf. Barnes, *Phoenix* XXIX (1975): 161 ff., 168. A patriciate for Merobaudes has also been opposed by Ensslin, *Klio* XXIV (1931): 484 ff., followed by Demandt, *RE* Suppl. XII: 668. The interpretation of these words to refer to the patriciate was proposed by Vollmer in his note ad loc. (*MGH:AA* XIV [1905]: 9), and this has been upheld by Bury (*Later Roman Empire* I: 251, n. 2); Stein (*Bas-Empire* I: 330); Sirago (*Galla Placidia*, p. 356); and, most recently, Clover (*Flavius Merobaudes*, pp. 35 f.; *Historia* XXVII [1978]: 188, n. 84) and Løyen (*op. cit.*, p. 157). Clover

(*Flavius Merobaudes*, n. 50) feels that this honor may have been bestowed on Merobaudes on the suggestion of Aetius.

46. *Vit. Germ.* 38; *Gesta de purgatione Xysti* 1063D, 1064D, 1067B. Cf. Barnes, *Phoenix* XXIX (1975): 158 f.; Clover, *Historia* XXVII (1978): 189 f.; *PLRE* II: 1010.

47. This, indeed, is the conclusion drawn by Twyman (*Historia* XIX [1970]: 500, 503). The patriciate of Sigisvult has been upheld also by Sundwall (*Weströmsche Studien*, no. 442); Stein (*Bas-Empire* I: 599, n. 187; II: 117 f., n. 2); Oost (*Galla Placidia*, p. 234, n. 90). The opponents are Ensslin (*Klio* XXIV [1931]: 483 f.); Demandt (*RE Suppl.* XII: 661 f.).

48. *Coll. Avell.* 30.

49. *CIL* VI: 8406; cf. Picotti, *ASI*, ser. 7, IX (1928): 49, n. 1; Ensslin, *Klio* XXIV (1931): 499 f. On the cancellarius and scriniarius, however, cf. Stein, *Bas-Empire* II: 117, n. 2. Demandt (*RE Suppl.* XII: 657) seems to have misunderstood Cassiod. *Var.* 1. 4. 10 f.; the *tribunus et notarius* there mentioned belong to the imperial *secretum*, not that of Aetius.

50. *Nov. Val.* 17, “De episcoporum ordinatione,” (8 July 445). *Nov. Val.* 33, “De parentibus, qui filios distraxerunt,” (31 January 451); here there are high words of praise for the concern shown by Aetius for every aspect of the people’s needs. *Nov. Val.* 36, “De boariis, suariis et pecuariis,” (29 June 452); cf. Jones, *Later Roman Empire* II: 703.

51. *Frg.* 8 (*HGM* I: 302).

52. *Vit. Germ.* 28, on a settlement of Alans by Aetius. Here, of course, one must allow for the Gallic sentiment that was strongly behind Aetius.

Chapter 7

1. On Aetius’s wife or wives, see Clover, *Flavius Merobaudes*, pp. 30–32 and *Historia* XXVII (1978): 172, 180. Loyen, *REA* LXXIV (1972): 171–74. The view supported by Loyen, that Aetius’s third wife was the daughter of Theoderic I, is attractive and accords well with the scanty evidence, but can hardly be described as a “quasi-certitude.”

2. *Prisc. frg.* 4. Cf. Cassiod. *Var.* 1.4. Clover (*Flavius Merobaudes*, p. 29) suggests that Carpilio was probably sent to the Huns some time after 433 to guarantee the treaty of that year. Cf. also Seeck, *Untergang* VI: 293 f.

3. Prisc. frgs. 8, 11.

4. Whether he authorized the massacre or not, he certainly claimed responsibility for it later, for it is mentioned in the inscription that formed the base of his statue in the Atrium Libertatis (see above, n. 32 to chapter 6); see also Prosp. 1322, s.a. 435; *Chron. Gall.* s.a. 436 (p. 660); Hydat. 108, 110; Cassiod. *Chron.* 1226; Fredegar 2. 51. Cf. Lizerand, *Aetius*, pp. 48-50; Coville, *Recherches*, pp. 105-9; Baynes, *JRS* XII (1922): 221; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, pp. 239 f.; Clover, *Flavius Merobaudes*, p. 45, n. 43; Mazzarino, *Renania romana*, pp. 297 ff. (on the dating, n. 6). This massacre, mistakenly linked with the invasion of Attila, is reflected in the *Nibelungenlied*.

5. Solari, *L'Antiquité classique*, II (1933), 371-75. Cf. also the rather extreme view of Wirth, *Historia*, XVI (1967), 249 f., who feels Aetius envisaged a kind of federal structure for the entire empire, which he saw as a group of equal partners, with the emperor confining himself to Italy and playing an ever decreasing role; this view might more appropriately be attributed to Ricimer.

6. *Chron. Gall.* s.a. 440-42 (p.660); *Vit. Germ.* 28. Cf. Lizerand, *Aetius*, pp. 52-55; Clover, *Flavius Merobaudes*, pp. 48 f.; Bachrach, *History of the Alans*, pp. 62-71 (but cf. Demougeot, *Revue archéologique*, 1975, p. 133). Goffart (*Barbarians and Romans*, pp. 111 ff.) has recently reinterpreted the "deserta rura" of the chronicler to mean not abandoned land but land whose owners were in arrears with their tax payments; cf. chap. 9, n. 59 in this volume.

7. *Chron. Gall.* s.a. 443 (p. 660); *Jord Get.* 44. Cf. Lizerand, *Aetius*, pp. 55 ff.; Coville, *Recherches*, pp. 109-17; Lot, *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* VII (1928): 977 ff.; Clover, *Flavius Merobaudes*, pp. 45 f. See now Goffart's re-interpretation of the evidence for the mechanics of barbarian settlement (*Barbarians and Romans*, chaps. 4 and 5, *passim*); cf. chap. 9, n. 59 in this volume. On the possible strategic motives for this choice of location, see Oost, *Galla Placidia*, p. 279, n. 104. Thompson (*JRS* XLVI [1956]: 65-75) argues very convincingly that Aetius's settlement of Alans and Burgundians, like Constantius's great final settlement of the Visigoths, were made with a view to protecting certain regions of Gaul not from external threat but from the *Bacaudae*; cf. *idem*, *Historia* XII (1963): 119-21; Clover, *Flavius Merobaudes*, pp. 46 ff.

8. On the Franks, see Lizerand, *Aetius*, pp. 37 ff., 84; Clover, *Flavius Merobaudes*, pp. 42-45; Ewig, *Hist. Forsch. Walter Schlesinger*, pp. 66 ff. On the Visigoths, see Wolfram, *Geschichte der Goten*, pp. 210 ff.

9. Hydat. 96, 98; cf. 91.

10. Hydat. 161; Seeck, *RE* I: 702; *idem*, *Untergang* VI: 319 f.

11. Merob. *Pan.* 2. 27-29; Procop. *Vand.* 1. 4. 12-14; Gitti, *Ricerche*, pp. 18-21, 54-59; Oost, *CP* LIX (1964): 27, n. 8; Clover, *Flavius Merobaudes*, pp. 24-28, 51-54. The betrothal was not necessarily part of the treaty of 442 (cf. Clover, p. 54, nn. 119, 120), but must have been agreed upon by 446, the date of Merob. *Pan.* 2 (Clover, p. 41).

12. Gitti, in *ASI*, ser. 7, IV (1925): 3-38 and *Ricerche*, pp. 67-81, argues strongly in favor of accepting the statement of John Ant. frg. 201. 6 that Gaiseric's assault on Rome was motivated by an invitation from Eudoxia. Even if the assertion of the invitation is true, however, it alone could hardly have sufficed to motivate so sudden an attack, though it might indeed explain why Gaiseric was able to capture Eudoxia and her daughters; one assumes that the imperial ladies could have escaped from Rome prior to Gaiseric's arrival had they seriously wished to do so, (but cf. Mazzarino, *Serena e le due Eudossie* p. 22). The possible motives for Gaiseric's sack of Rome are discussed at length by Clover, "Gaiseric the Statesman," pp. 142-62.

13. Clover, *Flavius Merobaudes*, p. 23.

14. On the terms of these treaties, see Clover, "Gaiseric the Statesman," pp. 53-60, 87-102; idem, *Flavius Merobaudes*, pp. 52 f.; Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, pp. 292 f., 296; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, p. 242, n. 121, pp. 260-63; Courtois, *Les Vandales et l'Afrique*, pp. 172-75.

15. Cf. Seeck, *Untergang* VI: 118.

16. On the state of Roman forces in Africa, see Jones, *Later Roman Empire* I: 197.

17. Bury, *Later Roman Empire* I: 256. Cf. Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, p. 469. Sirago (*Galla Placidia*, pp. 299 f.) even goes so far as to suggest that in pressing for the betrothal, Aetius was motivated partly by a desire to humiliate the dynasty.

18. Jord. *Get.* 184; cf. Gitti, *Ricerche*, pp. 64 f.

19. Oost, *Galla Placidia*, pp. 262-64, 287; Clover, *Flavius Merobaudes*, p. 54.

20. Theophan. 5964 tells what when Eudocia eventually fled from Huneric in 472 and retired to the Holy Land, she did so because of his Arianism.

21. Clover, *Flavius Merobaudes*, p. 41.

22. Cf. Gitti, *Ricerche*, pp. 54-63; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, pp. 262 f.

23. Nov. *Val.* 34. 4, trans. Clyde Pharr, *The Theodosian Code*, p. 545. Cf. Diesner, *Vandalenreich*, p. 48.

24. One instance is his scheme to flee with Valentinian from Italy on the occasion of Attila's invasion.

25. I follow the very plausible interpretation of Sid. Apoll. *Carm.* 5. 126-294 by Oost, *CP LIX* (1964): 23-29; cf. idem, *Galla Placidia*, pp. 286 f. Oost, however, regards the move by Valentinian as directed solely against Aetius, and not against the Vandals. On Majorian's military exploits under Aetius, see Sid. Apoll. *Carm.* 5. 210 ff.; cf. Ensslin, *RE XIV* (1930): 584; Stein, *Bas-Empire I*: 332, 581, n. 67.

26. This information comes from Prosp. 1373, s.a. 454:

Inter Valentinianum Augustum et Aetium patricium post premis-
sae invicem fidei sacramenta, post pactum de coniunctione
filiorum, dirae inimicitiae convaluerunt.

Exactly what the oath of friendship was, and how seriously it was to be taken, is not clear.

27. Gaudentius, son of Aetius's second wife, may have been born about 440; cf. Clover, *Flavius Merobaudes*, p. 29.

28. John Ant. frg. 201. 4. Cf. Oost, *Galla Placidia*, p. 302, n. 15; Twyman, *Historia XIX* (1970): 500 ff.

29. Cf. most notably Stein, *Bas-Empire I*: 337-42, endorsed by Demandt, *RE Suppl. XII*: 658.

30. Twyman, *Historia XIX* (1970): 493-99. But cf. Barnes, *Phoenix XXIX* (1975): 163 ff.

31. Oost, *Galla Placidia*, p. 237; Twyman, *Historia XIX* (1970): 480-503, *passim*.

32. On the forces available to Aetius during Attila's invasion, see Lizerand, *Aetius*, pp. 91 f.; Thompson, *Attila*, pp. 139 f.

33. It is difficult to extract anything intelligible about the actual battle from the sources. For a detailed analysis of all the sources, see Täckholm, *Opuscula Romana*, VII (15 [1969]): 266-69, esp. n. 2.

34. Greg. Tur. *HF* 2. 7; Jord. *Get.* 41. Gregory represents Aetius as dismissing the Frankish contingent in a similar manner. This may be further evidence of Aetius's concern not to destroy Hunnish power, but it may on the other hand be merely a nationalistic effort by Gregory to magnify the importance of the Franks at this period. Täckholm, (*Opuscula romana*, VII: 15 [1969])

269-72) is disinclined to accept the tradition represented by Gregory and Jordanes; he feels that Thorismund departed on his own initiative, leaving Aetius in the lurch, and does not allow that Aetius might have wished to spare the Huns.

35. As reflected in Prosp. 1367, s.a. 452.

36. Ibid.; cf. Jord. *Get.* 41 f.

37. *EHR* II (1887): 460.

38. This seems to be implied by Prosp. 1367, s.a. 452.

39. Cf. Thompson, *Attila*, p. 144.

40. *Nov. Val.* 33; cf. Thompson, *Attila*, p. 139.

41. Stevens, *Sidonius Apollinaris*, p. 21.

42. Cf. Prosp. 1367, s.a. 452.

43. “La versione interessata dinastica” is how Solari describes the Prosper account (*L’Antiquité classique* II (1933): 372). Cf. Täckholm (*Opuscula romana*, VII: 15 [1969], 261, n. 2) who feels that Prosper belittles Aetius’s contribution so that he can give high prominence to Pope Leo.

44. *The World of the Huns*, pp. 135 f.

45. There is some doubt concerning the identity of the Aetius referred to here by Hydatius. There are notices of several contemporaries or near-contemporaries of the western generalissimo Aetius who bore the same name as he (cf. *PLRE* II: 19 ff.). One of these, “Aetius 1” in *PLRE*, designated as “Aetios (3)” by Seeck, *RE* I: 701, was urban prefect in Constantinople in 419 and praetorian prefect in 425; he had a cistern built in Constantinople in 421, and an attempt was made to murder him in that city. Another (“Fl. Aetius 8” in *PLRE*; “Aetios (5)” in *RE*) was comes domesticorum et stabuli under Marcian in 451 and held the consulate in 454; it was he who, according to Seeck (loc. cit., also *Untergang* VI: 469) and *PLRE*, commanded the auxiliaries of Marcian against Attila, referred to by Hydatius. Freeman (*EHR* II [1887]: 428 f., 459 ff.) wished to conflate all three of these personages. The identification of the western generalissimo with the “Aetius 1” of *PLRE* is highly implausible, and I know of no other scholar who makes it. There has, however, been some support (as detailed by Demandt, *RE* Suppl. XII: 658) for the identification of the western generalissimo with the consul of 454, and yet other scholars (Solari, *L’Antiquité classique* II [1933]: 373; San Lazzaro, *Convivium* X [1938]: 338 f.; Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, p. 363, n. 3; Maenchen-Helfen, *The World of the Huns*, p. 138) contend that it was the western Aetius who commanded Marcian’s auxiliaries

against Attila. Oost (*Galla Placidia*, p. 299, n. 10) and Demandt (*RE Suppl.* XII: 658) have demonstrated clearly that the consul of 454 must have been the eastern Aetius (no. 8 of *PLRE*) and have removed any question of a fourth consulate for the western generalissimo. San Lazzaro has, however, marshalled very persuasive (though admittedly not conclusive) arguments for her contention that it was the western Aetius who commanded the auxiliaries of Marcian mentioned here by Hydatius.

46. Cf. Maenchen-Helfen, *The World of the Huns*, pp. 139 f.

47. Thompson, *Historia* XII (1963): 123-25.

48. *Prosop.* 1364, s.a. 451.

49. Cf. Seeck, *Untergang* VI: 299 f., 303 f.; A. Alföldi, in Rohden (ed.), *Menschen die Geschichte machten*, 255 f.; Thompson, *Attila*, pp. 130-32.

50. Cf. Seeck, *RE* II: 2242 f. On the affair of Honoria, see Bury, *JRS* IX (1919): 1-13; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, pp. 282-86; Mazzolani, *Galla Placidia*, pp. 398-403.

51. Cf. Oost, *Galla Placidia*, p. 295.

52. Marcell. s.a. 453; Malal. 14, p. 359. The story is not supported by the other sources; cf. Lizerand, *Aetius*, p. 110, n. 2.

53. *Vand.* 1. 3. 16-21. Cf. pp. 78 f. in this volume.

54. *Vand.* 1. 3. 15. In a recent article ("The Effects of the Policies of Aetius on the History of the Western Empire," *Historia* XXII [1973]: 711-31), J.R. Moss asserts that Aetius did not deserve this title; he was a traitor to the empire (on p. 729 Moss lists the instances), and his policy of exclusive concentration on the defence of Gaul, of exclusive reliance on the Huns, of abandonment of the sea, and of connivance at the Vandal occupation of Africa, was catastrophic. Moss forgets that any politician or general who is not a fanatic is interested primarily in his own career. Furthermore, his view that the Vandals were the real enemy of the empire and the Goths its natural allies is not adequately explained; any of the various barbarian peoples were potential allies or enemies, as all the great generalissimos realized. Moss seems almost to be implying that had Aetius not allowed the Vandals to settle in Africa the position of the Western Empire would still have been tenable, a variation of the old scapegoat theory for the decline and fall. All the barbarian peoples settled within the empire were equally responsible for the erosion of its structure, the Vandals no more than the rest, and one must guard against the temptation to look with undue severity on the Vandals or Huns merely because they disappeared rapidly from history and did not play as prominent a role as did the Goths, Burgundians, Franks or Saxons in creating the new world of medieval Europe.

55. Cf. Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, p. 39; Clover, *Flavius Merobaudes*, pp. 38 f.

56. *Flavius Merobaudes*, pp. 38 f.; cf. Stein, *Bas-Empire* I: 337 f.

Chapter 8

1. Sid. Apoll. *Carm.* 2. 360 ff., 5. 268; John Ant. frg. 209; Ennod. *Vit. Epiph.* 64, 67. Cf. Seeck RE: IA, 797; PLRE II: 942; Castritius, *Ancient Society* III (1972): 239-41.

2. *Carm.* 5. 266. Plausible though not certain is the suggestion of Loyen (*Recherches*, p. 76, n. 5) that Ricimer had participated in Aetius's victory over the Franks at Vicus Helena.

3. John Ant. frgs. 200. 2, 201. 4, 5, 6; *Cons. Ital.* s.a. 455. 2; Hydat. 162; Prosp. 1375, s.a. 455. Hydatius merely tells us that Maximus married Palladius to "Valentiniani filia"; scholars are divided as to whether the daughter was Eudocia or Placidia. On the background and ambitions of Petronius Maximus, see, most recently, Clover, *Historia* XXVII (1978): 182-92.

4. Sid. Apoll. *Carm.* 5. 266. Cf. Stevens, *Sidonius Apollinaris*, p. 26.

5. On this event, see Mathisen, *Byzantium* LI (1981): 232 ff. By a strangely convoluted line of reasoning, Papini (*Ricimero*, pp. 133-35) argues that the revolt in Rome, in which Maximus died, though carried out by pro-Vandal elements, was actually fomented by Ricimer and Majorian, and that the non-defence of Rome against Gaiseric was a brilliant stratagem on the part of Ricimer that quite upset Gaiseric's plans and saved Italy and the throne. Apart from its being a piece of pure speculation, this theory would ascribe to Ricimer a degree of power and prestige that he probably did not possess in 455; furthermore, Majorian, far from having an "inferiority complex" vis-à-vis Ricimer, probably had, up until his death, at least as strong an influence with the troops as Ricimer had. On Gaiseric's motivations for sacking Rome, see above, pp. 90 f.; his subsequent return to Africa was due quite simply to the fact that he did not have the strength to hold Rome permanently, and there are no grounds for assuming that he ever had any intention of doing so.

6. See above, p. 96; Stevens, *Sidonius Apollinaris*, pp. 22 f.; Wolfram, *Geschichte der Goten*, p. 216. Cf. Sidonius's panegyric addressed to Avitus (*Carm.* 7. 512-14):

. . . regnum non praeripis ulli,
nec quisquam Latias Augustus possidet arces;
qua vacat, aula tua est. . . .

7. Hydat. 176, 177; Sid. Apoll. *Carm.* 2. 367; Prisc. frg. 24. Cf. Solari, *Rinnovamento* I: 392, 474, n. 78; Clover, "Geiseric the Statesman," pp. 166 f. (who describes the engagements as minor encounters); Mathisen, *Byzantion* LI (1981): 244, n. 42.

8. He is first attested as *magister militum* in the war against Avitus (*Cons. Ital.* s.a. 456). On the sequence of these events, see Demandt, *RE Suppl.* XII: 682 f.

9. See below, n. 12.

10. The majority of scholars feel that Avitus was not recognized by Marcian. Opinions are summarized most recently by Mathisen, *Byzantion* LI (1981): 235 ff.

11. John Ant. frg. 202; Mathisen, *Byzantion* LI (1981): 244 ff. It is not necessary to suppose, with Hodgkin (*Italy and Her Invaders* II: 390), that Ricimer's animosity against the rule of Avitus was prompted by displeasure at the massacre of Sueves, which was being carried out, at just this time, by the Visigoths under Theoderic; Ricimer was at least as much attached to the Visigoths as he was to the Sueves, and was later to enjoy excellent relations with Theoderic.

12. The principal sources on the foregoing events are: *Cons. Ital.* s.a. 456; John Ant. frg. 202; Theophan. 5948; Evagr. 2.7; Greg. Tur. *HF* 2. 11; *Chron. Gall.* p. 664, no. 628; Hydat. 183. Cf. Demandt, *RE Suppl.* XII: 672 f. On the death of Avitus, see Stevens, *Sidonius Apollinaris*, p. 38, n. 4.

13. Seeck, *Untergang* VI: 338, but cf. Picotti, *ASI*, ser. 7, IX (1928): 53, n. 4.

14. Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders* II: 401; Martroye, *Genséric*, pp. 178 f.

15. Baynes, *JRS* XII (1922): 225-27; Demandt, *RE Suppl.* XII: 683.

16. Cf. Picotti, *ASI*, ser. 7, IX (1928): 53 f. Picotti is surely wrong, however, in assuming that Ricimer received his promotion not from Leo but from the Roman senate; there is no evidence or parallel for such a promotion.

17. Cf. Demandt, *RE Suppl.* XII: 673, 683.

18. There is considerable controversy regarding both the exact date of Majorian's accession and the question of his recognition in the East, and neither problem has received a definitive solution. Concerning the latter problem, the "majority opinion," as summed up most recently by Kaegi, is that "the preponderance of evidence indicates there was an estrangement between Leo and Majorian and that Leo never recognized Majorian" (*Byzantium and the Decline of Rome*, pp. 31-34). The other view, that Majorian received full recognition from Leo, is that of Baynes (*JRS* XII [1922]: 222-24; XVIII [1928], 225), and this has been upheld by Meyer (*Byzantinische Zeitschrift* LXII

[1969]: 10-12). With regard to the exact date of Majorian's accession, the evidence and scholarly opinion are summed up by Meyer (pp. 8-10), who maintains the view that Majorian became Caesar on 1 April 457 and Augustus on 28 December of the same year; cf., however, Nagy, *A. Ant. Hung.* XV (1967): 183.

19. *Nov. Maior.* 1, of January 458. In *Nov. Maior.* 11 of 28 March 460 there is a full-scale echo of the now traditional titulature for a *generalissimo*; the law is addressed: "Ricimeri v. inl. com. et mag. utriusque militiae atque patricio."

20. Seeck, *Regesten*, s.a.; Picotti, *ASI*, ser. 7, IX (1928): 55. Ricimer's consulate was not proclaimed in the East (Seeck, *Untergang* VI: 339).

21. Meyer, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* LXII (1969): 7 f.; Seeck, *Untergang* VI: 347 f.

22. Cf. Ensslin, *Klio* XXIV (1931): 501.

23. Cf. Picotti, *ASI*, ser. 7, IX (1928): 54 f.

24. Cf. *Nov. Maior.* 11: "De episcopali iudicio et ne quis invitus clericus ordinetur vel de ceteris negotiis."

25. *Sid. Apoll. Carm.* 5. 553 ff. Cf. Seeck, *Untergang* VI: 348; Stein, *Bas-Empire* I: 378, 598, esp. n. 72.

26. Cf. Vassili, *Athenaeum*, n.s., XIV (1936): 56-66.

27. "Nepotianus Theuderico ordinante Arborium accepit successorem" — Hydat. 213, s.a. 462-3 in *Chron. Min.* II: 32, but dated to 461 by Courtois, *Byzantion* XXI (1951): 54. Cf. Ensslin, *Klio* XXIV (1931): 490 f.; Stein, *Bas-Empire* I: 381; Demandt, *RE Suppl.* XII: 683 f.; Loyen, *Recherches*, p. 82, n. 4; Meyer, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* LXII (1969): 8, n. 28; Oost, *CP* LXV (1970): 233, n. 30.

28. Cf. Oost, *CP* LXV (1970): 232 f.

29. See, for example, Bury, *Later Roman Empire* I: 332; Ensslin, *RE* XIV: 589.

30. Majorian's death: *Cons. Ital.* s.a. 461; Marcell. s.a. 461.2; *Chron. Gall.* p. 664, no. 635; Hydat. 210; Cassiod. *Chron.* 1274; Vict. Tonn. s.a. 463; Mar. Aven. *Chron.*, s.a. 461; John Ant. frg. 203; Jord. *Get.* 45. 236; Evagr. 2. 7; Theophan. 5955; Procop. *Vand.* 1. 7. 14.; Mich. Syr. 9. 1 (p.126 of Chabot ed.). In 464 Ricimer defeated a band of Alans near Bergamo and killed their king, Beorgor (*PLRE* II: 224, s.v. "Beorgor"); these may have been remnants of the

large army that Majorian had assembled against Gaiseric (cf. Demougeot, *Revue archéologique* (1975): 131 f.) The variations in the sources concerning the character of Ricimer are discussed by Nagy, *A. Ant. Hung.* XV (1967): 175–77.

31. *Cons. Ital.*, s.a. 461. Cf. Stevens, *Sidonius Apollinaris*, p. 58, n. 5; Demandt, *RE Suppl.* XII: 674. On the nonrecognition by the East, see Nagy, *A. Ant. Hung.* XV (1967): 178–84, who argues that in 463 there was an improvement in relations between eastern and western courts, and feels that in that year the East made a de facto recognition of Severus as Caesar, but never accepted him as Augustus.

32. 20 February 463. Cf. *Nov. Maior.* 6.

33. Carson and Kent, *Late Roman Bronze Coinage*, p. 63, nos. 871 f.; p. 110 (though in this work the monogram is described, rather implausibly, as that of Severus himself.)

34. So, Ulrich-Bansa, *Moneta Mediolanensis*, p. 275 (where it is argued that the presence of Ricimer's monogram indicates that Leo must have delegated to him the power of thus signing all public acts until a new western emperor had been chosen); Picozzi, *La monetazione imperiale romana*, p. 105. There exists a report, from the year 1864, of the finding of a bronze coin bearing the head and name of Ricimer himself (Biraghi, *I tre sepolcri santambrosiani*, pp. 31 f.); while such a coinage is not an absolute impossibility (Odovacar was later to do it), one tends to suspect a case of misreading, given the tiny size and lamentable condition of coins of this time. Demandt (*RE Suppl.* XII: 674 f.) reports that the coin is no longer available for inspection, having apparently been lost; to Dr. J.P.C. Kent of the British Museum I owe the suggestion that the coin may have subsequently been reinterpreted (correctly) as something else, and may not, in fact, have been lost.

35. *CIL* X: 8072. 4 (*ILS*, no. 813); Friedlaender, *Zeitschrift für Numismatik* IX (1882): 1 f.; Cantarelli, *Bollettino della commissione archeologica comunale di Roma* XVI (1888): 194 f. Cf., however, the reservations of Oost, *CP* LXV (1970): 237.

36. *Sid. Apoll. Ep.* 1. 9. 2. Cf. Stein, *Bas-Empire* I: 380, 599, esp. n. 87; Demandt, *RE Suppl.* XII: 674.

37. Cf. *Nov. Maior.* 11.

38. Or possibly 14 November; on the chronology, see Seeck, *Untergang* VI: 483 f., *Regesten*, p. 412.

39. “Ut dicitur, Ricimeris fraude Severus Romae in palatio veneno peremptus est” (*Chron.* 1280).

40. On this last possibility, cf. the excellent observations of Stevens, *Sidonius Apollinaris*, pp. 99 f., who detects in this panegyric several thinly veiled criticisms of Ricimer.

41. Cf. Oost, *CP LXV* (1970): 240. On the dating and circumstances of Olybrius’s marriage with Valentinian’s daughter Placidia, see Clover, *Flavius Merobaudes*, pp. 25 f., and, at a more speculative level, idem, *Historia XXVII* (1978): 169-96.

42. Prisc. frg. 40; cf. Gordon, *The Age of Attila*, p. 118. On the dating, see Gordon, *ibid.*, pp. 189 f.

43. Cf. Oost, *CP LXV* (1970): 240.

44. On general relations between Leo and Gaiseric, and on this treaty in particular, see Clover, “Geiseric the Statesman,” pp. 185-93.

45. Jordanes *Rom.* 335, *Get.* 236; Marcell. s.a. 461. Cf. above, n. 31.

46. Anthemius was raised to the purple on 12 April 467 (Seeck, *Regesten*, p. 414). On the date of Severus’s death, see above, n. 38.

47. Prisc. frg. 40; Vict. Vit. 1. 51; Procop. *Vand.* 1. 5. 22, 1. 6. 6, 1. 22. 16 f. This may not, however, have taken place until after Leo had already selected Anthemius for the western throne. Cf. Stein, *Bas-Empire* I: 359; Clover, “Geiseric the Statesman,” p. 193, esp. n. 2.

48. Seeck, *Untergang* VI: 352.

49. Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders* II: 440 f.

50. Cf. Stein, *Bas-Empire* I: 359, 387 f.; Vassili, *Riv. Fil.*, n.s., XV (1937): 165-68.

51. On Anthemius’s family background, military achievements, and general character, see Seeck, *RE* I: 2365-68; Vassili, *Riv. Fil.*, n.s., XV (1937): 165-68; *PLRE* II: 96 f.

52. Indeed, a formal request to Leo to send the already chosen Anthemius was made by a delegation of the Roman Senate; see below, n. 102.

53. On Marcellinus’s career and character see Ensslin, *RE* XIV: 1446-48; Sundwall, *Weströmische Studien*, no. 294; Demandt, *RE Suppl.* XII: 684-87.

54. Sid. Apoll. *Ep.* 1. 11. 6. Our mss. of Sidonius actually speak of a “con-iuratio marcellana” or “marcelliana”; emendation to “Marcelliniana” or “Marcellini” was proposed by Mommsen, *MGH: AA VIII* (1887): 430. Thus it is not certain, though it is frequently suggested, that the reference is to Marcellinus of Dalmatia. Cf. Ensslin, *RE XIV*: 1446 f.; Stevens, *Sidonius Apollinaris*, pp. 41-44; Anderson, *Sidonius: Poems and Letters I*: 400, n. 1, and p. xxiii of intro.; Max, *Historia*, XXVIII (1979): 225-31.

55. Prisc. frgs. 29, 30. On his status in Dalmatia, Wilkes, *Dalmatia*, p. 420; Wozniak, *Historia XXX* (1981): 356 ff.

56. Hydat. 227; cf. Courtois, *Byzantion XXI* (1951): 54.

57. Prisc. frg. 30; cf. Nagy, *A. Ant. Hung. XV* (1967): 181.

58. See below, n. 59. Cf. Sundwall, *Weströmische Studien*, no. 294; Seeck, *Untergang VI*, 360; Ensslin *RE XIV*: 1447; idem, *Klio XXIV* (1931): 492; Stein, *Bas-Empire I*: 388; Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, p. 312.

59. Demandt (*RE Suppl. XII*: 685-87) is at some pains to prove that Ricimer and Marcellinus could not have held identical rank. This is doubtless true as regards their magisteria, but Demandt also argues against Marcellinus’s patriciate, pointing out that there is mention of it only in the annals of his namesake Marcellinus Comes (s.a. 468, 474) and in sources that derive from him, and further that the same Marcellinus Comes, on the single occasion when he refers to Ricimer, does not give him the title of “patricius” but refers to him rather by the more barbarian title of “rex” (s.a. 464). Thus, according to Demandt, Marcellinus Comes simply ascribes the patriciate to the wrong general, but nowhere implies that two generals held it simultaneously; mistaken attributions of the patriciate in this period are not lacking. Picotti (*ASI*, ser. 7, IX (1928): 56 f.) apparently tries to get around the problem by assuming (if one understands him correctly) that Ricimer was, at the beginning of Anthemius’s reign, obliged to cede the position to Marcellinus, but soon forced Anthemius to return to it him, presumably at Marcellinus’s expense.

60. See pp. 85 f. in this volume.

61. Procop. *Vand.* 1. 6. 25. Cf. Marcell. s.a. 468; *Cons. Ital.* s.a. 468.

62. Sundwall, *Weströmische Studien*, no. 294; Seeck, *RE I*: 2366; idem., *Untergang VI*: 368; Picotti, *ASI*, ser. 7, IX (1928): 57; Ensslin, *RE XIV*: 1447; idem, *Klio XXIV* (1931): 492; Stein, *Bas-Empire I*: 391; Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, p. 312. Demandt (*RE Suppl. XII*: 685) rather unconvincingly argues against it.

63. “Pellitus Geta” (Ennod. *Vit. Epiph.* 67) vividly sums up Anthemius’s view of the barbarian generalissimo; Ricimer’s epithet of “Galata concitatus” (ibid. 53) for the emperor evidently contained some sting whose significance is no longer clear.

64. Sid. Apoll. *Ep.* 5. 16. 2; 1. 9. 6; 9. 16. 3, v. 30.

65. Sid. Apoll. *Ep.* 1. 7; Paul Diac. *HR* 15. 2; Cassiod. *Chron.* 1287; *PLRE* II: 157 f. Cf. Wolfram, *Geschichte der Goten*, pp. 221 f.

66. Stein, *Bas-Empire* I: 389 f.

67. John Ant. frg. 207; Paul Diac. *HR* 15. 2; Vassili, *NRS* XXI (1937): 51–53; Stein, *Bas-Empire* I: 391–93. But cf. Clover, “Geiseric the Statesman,” p. 201, who feels that the evidence is not firm enough to warrant the assumption of a Vandal attack in 470.

68. John Ant. frg. 207. Cf. Seeck, *RE* I: 2367; idem, *Untergang* VI: 371; Vassili, *NRS* XXI (1937): 52 f.

69. *PLRE* II: 1147. Valila is referred to as “comes et magister utriusque militiae” in a document known as the *Charta Cornutiana*; see Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis* I: cxlvi in intro., and cf. p. 250.

70. Castritius, *Ancient Society* III (1972): 241–43.

71. Cassiod. *Chron.* 1289; John Ant. frg. 207.

72. Such is the more usual interpretation of John Ant. frg. 207; Clover (“Geiseric the Statesman,” p. 201, n. 1) interprets the Greek to mean that it was Anthemius who became angered and marched out of Rome with the intention of using the 6,000 men against Ricimer, who was already residing in Milan.

73. Ennod. *Vit. Epiph.* 51–74.

74. *Chron. Gall.*, p. 664, no. 649; cf. Seeck, *Untergang* VI: 373, 490. On Riothamus, *PLRE* II: 945.

75. Stein, *Bas-Empire* I: 361.

76. *PLRE* II: 796. Both sources and scholars are quite divided as to the time and place of Olybrius’s marriage with Placidia; see, most recently, Clover, *Historia* XXVII (1978): 176 ff., 192 ff.

77. As does Seeck, *Untergang* VI: 373 f., 491; but cf. Clover, “Geiseric the Statesman,” p. 206, n. 1 of p. 205.

78. Seeck, *RE* I: 2207 f.; Vassili, *Riv. Fil.*, n.s., XV (1937): 160–64; Clover, *Historia* XXVII (1978): 169–96.

79. Vassili, op.cit., p. 163; idem., *Athenaeum*, n.s., XVI (1938): 38-45; Stein, *Bas-Empire* I: 393 f. In Constantinople Olybrius had built a church to St. Euphemia (*Chron. Pasch.* s.a. 464).

80. Theophan. 5964; *Chron. Pasch.* s.a. 464; Paul Diac. *HR* 15. 3; Malal. 14, pp.373-75.

81. The authenticity of the Malalas account (14, pp. 373 ff.) has been defended by Bury (*EHR* I [1886]: 507-9; *Later Roman Empire* I: 339 f.) but attacked by Vassili (*Riv. Fil.*, n.s., XV [1937]: 163) and Schmidt (*Geschichte der Wandalen*, p. 92, n. 1). More recently, Bury's interpretation has been upheld by Clover ("Geiseric the Statesman," p. 205, n. 1), who points out, in criticism of Vassili, that there is no contradiction between the group of sources that ascribe the accession of Olybrius solely to the efforts of Ricimer (Vict. Tonn. 473. 6; Cassiod. *Chron.* 1293, s.a. 472; Evagr. 2. 16; Niceph. 15. 11; John Ant. frg. 209) and those which give a prominent part to Leo, but that the former probably give only a partial view.

82. Cf. Oost, *CP* LXV (1970): 239, n. 59.

83. *Bas-Empire* I: 603, n. 171.

84. Bury, *EHR* I (1886): 507-9. For the older view, that Leo secretly connived at Olybrius's elevation, see Gibbon, *Decline and Fall* (ed. Bury) IV: 44; cf. also Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders* II: 476.

85. Cf. Clover, "Geiseric the Statesman," pp. 204 f. More recently, Clover surely overstates the case in describing Olybrius as a representative of western barbarian royalty (*Historia* XXVII [1978]: 195).

86. Paul Diac. *HR* 15. 4. On the identity of this personage, see below, n. 98.

87. John Ant. frg. 209. 1; *Cons. Ital.* s.a. 472; *Chron. Gall.* p. 664, no. 650; Cassiod. *Chron.* 1293; Marcell. s.a. 472. 2; Paul Diac. *HR* 15. 4.

88. *PLRE* II: 797 f.

89. Cf. Loyen, *Recherches*, p. 93.

90. Prisc. frgs. 29, 30; John Ant. frg. 204.

91. Cf. Sundwall, *Weströmische Studien*, p. 16.

92. I am following the reconstruction of Vassili, *Athenaeum*, n.s. XIV (1936): 179 f. Cf. Ensslin, *Klio* XXIV (1931): 486, 491; Demandt, *RE* Suppl. XII: 690. Stein, however, feels that the Burgundian king Gundioch (to be discussed

below) was Aegidius's direct successor in the magisterium (*Bas-Empire* I: 381). On Agrippinus's career and policies, see Vassili, *op.cit.*, pp. 175-80. On Aegidius's career, see, most recently, Demandt, *op.cit.*, 688-91; *PLRE* II: 11 ff.

93. Hydat. 228; Sid. Apoll. *Carm.* 23. 69 ff.; cf. *Carm.* 22 *ep.* 1. Cf. Stevens, *Sidonius Apollinaris*, pp. 89-91.

94. In his struggle against Ricimer, Aegidius was not above also negotiating with Gaiseric (Hydat. 224, s.a. 465; cf. Courtois, *Byzantion* XXI [1951]: 54). This piece of information may be partly responsible for Papini's elaborate theory (*Ricimero*, pp. 139-44) of a plot by Majorian, Aegidius, Marcellinus, and Gaiseric against the Roman senate and Ricimer, which forced Ricimer to depose Majorian and free Agrippinus and send him back to Gaul.

95. Hydat. 228. On the date, see Courtois, *Byzantion* XXI (1951): 54.

96. Stein, *Bas-Empire* I: 388-93; Wolfram, *Geschichte der Goten*, pp. 219 f.

97. Married to Ricimer's sister: John Ant. *frag.* 209. 2; Malal. 14, p. 374; Paul Diac. *HR* 15. 5. First attested as mag. mil. Gall.: *MGH:ep.*, III: 19 (p. 28), of 10 October 463. On Gundio's career, see Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, pp. 140 ff.; Demandt, *RE* Suppl. XII: 694 f.

98. On Gundobad, see Coville, *Recherches*, pp. 162-65, 174-77. Concerning the magisterium, I follow Demandt's reconstruction of events, *RE* Suppl. XII: 676 f., 694 f. Ensslin (*Klio* XXIV [1931]: 493), Schmidt (*Ostgermanen*, pp. 142, 178) and Stein (*Bas-Empire* I: 386, 394) would make the magisterium a hereditary attribute of the Burgundian kingship and so would have it pass next to Gundio's successor Chilperic. Ensslin suggests that after the victory over Anthemius, Olybrius made Gundobad his second magister praesentalis; Stein, as also Schmidt (*op. cit.*, pp. 146 f.), would have Gundobad occupying this position even before the final battle. According to Demandt, Chilperic became magister militum per Gallias in August 472 when Gundobad was promoted to the place of the dead Ricimer. At some stage in the course of his struggle with Ricimer, Anthemius seems to have appointed a certain Bilimer as a rival to Gundobad in the magisterium of Gaul, for Paulus Diaconus tells us that "Bilimer, Galliarum rector," came to the assistance of Anthemius during the siege of Rome (*HR* 15. 4; Seeck, *RE* III: 471; Sundwall, *Weströmische Studien*, no. 68); Stein (*op.cit.* I: 394 f., 603, n. 172) would identify this man with the Ostrogothic king Vidimer, known from Jord. *Get.* 283 f., Rom. 347, and this view was accepted by Ensslin (*op.cit.*, p. 493 f.), but cf. Stevens (*Sidonius Apollinaris*, p. 151, n. 2), Schmidt (*op.cit.*, p. 277, n. 1), and esp. Demandt (*op.cit.*, pp. 695-97).

99. Cf. Stroheker, *Germanentum und Spätantike*, p. 94.
100. Sundwall, *Weströmische Studien*, pp. 13 f.; Stein, *Bas-Empire* I: 372.
101. Oost, *CP LXV* (1970): 231–33.
102. “κατὰ πρεσβείαν τῆς συγκλήτου Ῥώμης” (Theophan. 5957). Cf. Seeck, *Untergang* VI: 359, 486; Vassili, *Riv. Fil.*, n.s., XV (1937): 167, n. 5.
103. Oost, *CP LXV* (1970): 233–35.
104. Cf. Stroheker, *Germanentum und Spätantike*, p. 94.

Chapter 9

1. John Ant. frg. 209. 2; *Cons. Ital.* s.a. 472; Paul Diac. *HR* 15. 5.
2. As proposed by Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, p. 314, n. 5; Heil, *Der konstantinische Patriziat*, pp. 90 f., 116. *Cons. Ital.* s.a. 472, cited by Schmidt, in no way supports his view.
3. Stein, *Bas-Empire* I: 394; Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, pp. 146 f., but cf. p. 313.
4. Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders* II: 477.
5. *PLRE* II: 797 f.; Capizzi, *Rivista di studi bizantini e neoellenici*, n.s., V (1968): 209, n. 2.
6. John Ant. frg. 209. 2; Cassiod. *Chron.* 1295; Paul Diac. *HR* 15. 5.
7. John Ant. frg. 209. 2. Cf. the words of Marcell. s.a. 473: “Glycerius . . . plus praesumptione quam electione Caesar factus est.”
8. Sid. Apoll. (*Ep.* 5. 16. 2) names Nepos as the successor of Anthemius; cf. Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, p. 315.
9. Schmidt (*Ostgermanen*, p. 147) is opposed to the idea that Gundobad left Italy of his free will, but there is no evidence of hostilities having occurred, nor is there any reason to believe that Nepos brought with him a stronger force than that which Gundobad might have mustered. There is no need to assume with Benjamin (*RE* VII: 1938), following the earlier scholars Pallmann and Binding (cf. Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders* II: 482), that Gundobad was called off to his homeland by the “sonst nicht bezeugte Tod” of his father Gundioc; for a more satisfactory treatment of events concerning the Burgundian royal

family at this time, see Coville, *Recherches*, pp. 162–65; Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, pp. 142, 146 f.

10. Cf. Heil, *Der konstantinische Patriziat*, p. 92, who makes an excellent distinction between the “Patriziat westlicher Prägung” and the “Patriziat byzantinischer Prägung,” both of which developed in different directions.

11. That there can be no serious doubt concerning the identity of the generalissimo Gundobad and the later Burgundian king of the same name, see Demandt, *RE Suppl.* XII: 677. Cf. Benjamin, *RE* VII: 1938.

12. On Nepos’s origin and early career, see Ensslin, *RE* XVI: 2505 f.; Demandt, *RE Suppl.* XII: 677; *PLRE* II: 777.

13. Ensslin, *Klio* XXIV (1931): 495; *RE* XVI: 2506. Cf. Picotti, *ASI*, ser. 7, IX (1928): 60, who notes, “. . . il ‘patricius’ assume, consenziente o no l’imperatore, il diadema.” For the older view, that from the very beginning of the expedition Leo intended Nepos for his western colleague, see Seeck, *Untergang* VI: 375; Stein, *Bas-Empire* I: 362, 395.

14. Demandt, *RE Suppl.* XII: 677–80.

15. Glycerius, at least, had risen from their ranks—he had been comes domesticorum (John Ant. frg. 209. 2)—but Nepos, in the eyes of the troops, was an outsider, another “Graecus imperator.” Cf. Vassili, *Riv. Fil.*, n.s., XVII (1939): 261.

16. On his origin and early career, see Seeck, *RE* V: 2159 f.; *PLRE* II: 383 f. On his promotion, Jord. *Get.* 45. 240 f.; Sid. Apoll. *Ep.* 5. 16. 1 f., 3. 7. 2; Demandt, *RE Suppl.* XII: 680. It is hard to see how Picotti (*ASI*, ser. 7, IX [1928]: 60, n. 3) can argue that Ecdicius held only the civilian patriciate, in the light of Jordanes’ statement that he was the predecessor of Orestes: “. . . loco eius Orestem mag. mil. ordinatum.”

17. Sid. Apoll. *Ep.* 5. 16. 2. Cf. Ensslin, *Klio* XXIV (1931): 495 f.; Stroheker, *Germanentum und Spätantike*, p. 98, n. 2. It should be observed, however, that Sid. Apoll. *Ep.* 3. 3. 9, cited by Seeck (*RE* V: 2160; *Untergang* VI: 376, 492) as evidence of a sojourn by Ecdicius at Anthemius’s court, could just as well refer to the period following his recall by Nepos (cf. Anderson, *Sidonius: Poems and Letters* II: 20, n. 1; also n. 20 of present chapter) or even to a sojourn at the Burgundian court (cf. Anderson, *ibid.*, I, p. xlvii). For a general discussion of chronology, see Stevens, *Sidonius Apollinaris*, app. E, pp. 197–207; but cf. Ensslin, *RE* XVI: 2506–8.

18. Cf. Ensslin, *RE* XVI: 2507.

19. *Chron. Gall.* 653 (p. 665). Cf. Ensslin, *RE* XVI: 2506 f.; Vassili, *Riv. Fil.*, n.s., XVI (1938): 56–59.

20. Jordanes indicates that he was actually summoned to Italy: “Nepus imperator praecepit Ecdicium relictis Galliis ad se venire. . . .” (*Get.* 241). Cf. Stevens, *Sidonius Apollinaris*, p. 161, n. 6; Seeck, *Untergang* VI: 377; Solari, *Rinnovamento* I: 461, 506, n. 401.

21. So Seeck, *Untergang* VI: 376 f. But cf. Solari, *Rinnovamento* I: 461, 506, n. 401.

22. That Orestes was *magister militum praesentalis* and not *magister militum per Gallias*, see Vassili, *Riv. Fil.*, n.s., XVII (1939): 262, n. 5.

23. *Prisc.* frgs. 7, 8; *Anon. Val.* 8. 38. On his origin and early career, see Ensslin, *RE* XVIII: 1012; Vassili, *Riv. Fil.*, n.s., XVII (1939): 262; *PLRE* II: 811.

24. Romulus: Sundwall, *Weströmische Studien*, no. 412.

25. Cf. Solari, *Rinnovamento* I: 461.

26. Certainly not the Visigoths, for peace had just been concluded with Euric; cf. Stevens, *Sidonius Apollinaris*, p. 211, n. 1. There is no evidence for Seeck’s assumption (*Untergang* VI: 377) that Orestes had been named *magister militum per Gallias* and at the time of his revolt was leading an army thither. One does not even know if the army was being led out of Italy; Jordanes (*Get.* 241) merely states that Orestes was proceeding “*contra hostes*.”

27. *Cons. Ital.* s.a. 475; *Paschale Campanum* 475 (*Chron. Min.* II: 746); *Marcell.* s.a. 475. 2, 480. 2; *Cassiod. Chron.* 1301; *Laterc. Imper.* 423; *Jord. Rom.* 344, *Get.* 45. 241, 46. 242; *Procop. Goth.* 1. 1. 2; *Evagr.* 2. 16; *Theophan.* 5965; *Paul Diac. HR* 15. 7. On the dating, see Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, p. 316; Vassili, *Riv. Fil.*, n.s., XVII (1939): 263.

28. Cf. Demandt, *RE Suppl.* XII: 681.

29. Cf. *Cons. Ital.* s.a. 475: “Orestes primatum omnemque sibi vindicans dignitatem Augustulum filium suum apud Ravennam positus imperatorem facit, ipse vero omnem curam externorum praesidiorum gerit.”

30. Both Vassili (*Riv. Fil.*, n.s., XVII [1939]: 264) and Solari (*Rinnovamento* I: 462 f., 507, n. 408) see Orestes as a kind of successor of Majorian, continuing to defend the interests of “l’intransigenza nazionale romana” against alien

influences, both eastern and barbarian. Both scholars seem to overlook his much greater affinity with the line of fifth-century generalissimos.

31. Paul Diac. *HR* 15. 7. But cf. Courtois, *Les Vandales et l'Afrique*, p. 204, n. 3.

32. As does Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, p. 316 and *Geschichte der Wandalen* p. 92. Cf. Clover, "Geiseric the Statesman," p. 212. On the failure to win eastern recognition, see Vassili, *Riv. Fil.*, n.s., XVII (1939): 264, n. 1. Constantinople continued to regard Nepos as legitimate emperor of the West.

33. Procop. *Goth.* 1.1. 4f. (to be noted is the "ἐκέλευον" in regard to the demand); but cf. Goffart's doubts concerning Procopius's reliability in his treatment of events earlier than his own time (*Barbarians and Romans*, pp. 60 ff.) On the nature and implications of the soldiers' demand, see Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, pp. 316 f. (but cf. Goffart's reinterpretation, below, n. 59.) On earlier applications of hospitalitas, see chapter 5, n. 44 and chapter 7, n.7 in this volume.

34. Cf. Procop. *Goth.* 1. 1. 5: "ταῦτά τε ποιήσειν αὐτὸν ὥς ἥκιστα ὁμολογοῦντα εὐθὺς ἐκτειναν." I can find no foundation in Procopius for Nagl's statement that Orestes had earlier promised one third of the Italian lands to his troops as a reward for their support against Nepos (*RE* XVII: 1889 f.).

35. *Cons. Ital.* s.a. 476; Ennod. *Vit. Epiph.* 100; Marcell. s.a. 476. 2; Cassiod. *Chron.* 1303; *Laterc. Imper.* p. 423; Jord. *Get.* 46. 242, *Rom.* 344; Procop. *Goth.* 1. 1. 5 ff.; Paul Diac. *HR* 15. 9 f.

36. Cf. Momigliano, *Annali della scuola normale superiore di Pisa*, ser. 3, III (1973): 397-418. On the significance attached to this event by contemporaries and near-contemporaries, see Wes, *Das Ende des Kaisertums*, chap. 3, "Das Jahr 476 in den Quellen."

37. In choosing among the several variant spellings of this man's name, it seems most appropriate to follow the guidance of coins and inscriptions. Cf. Nagl, *RE* XVII: 1888; Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, p. 317, n. 2; Maenchen-Helfen, *AHR* LII (1946-47): 838; *PLRE* II: 791.

38. John Ant. frg. 209. 1. It is possible, though in no way certain, that his father (Ἰδικῶν in John Ant.; Aedico in Anon. Val. 45) was the Edecon who figured prominently in a Hunnish embassy to Constantinople in the days of Attila (Prisc. frg. 5). The matter of Odovacar's background has been examined by numerous scholars. Cf. inter alios Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders* II: 515-18; Bury, *Later Roman Empire* I: 406, n. 2; Nagl, *RE* XVII: 1888 f.;

Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, p. 317; Reynolds and Lopez, *AHR* LII (1946-47): 36-53 (who would make Odovacar a Hun); Maenchen-Helfen, *AHR* LII (1946-47): 836-41, esp. n. 31; Thompson, *Attila*, pp. 155 f.

39. John Ant. (frg. 214a; *FHG* V: 29) makes him sixty years old at the time of his death in 493.

40. Procop. *Goth.* 1. 1; John Ant. frg. 209; Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, pp. 99, 317 f.; Nagl, *RE* XVII: 1889; Solari, *Rinnovamento* I: 508 f., n. 416. On the impossible theory that Odovacar came to Italy as an agent of Nepos with the mission of overthrowing Orestes, see Picotti, *ASI*, ser. 7, IX (1928): 66, n. 1.

41. Cf. Solari, *Rinnovamento* I: 464 f.

42. *Cons. Ital.* s.a. 476; Jord. *Get.* 46. 242, 57. 291; *Laterc. Imper.* p. 423. Cf. Nagl, *RE* XVII: 1890; Ensslin, *Serta Hoffileriana*, p. 386.

43. Anon. Val. 64. On the dating (late 476 or early 477) and certain other problems surrounding this embassy, see Picotti, *ASI*, ser. 7, IX (1928): 65-71; Nagl, *RE* XVII: 1890 f.; Solari, *Rinnovamento* I: 467 f., 515 f.; II: 3 f.; Stein, *Bas-Empire* II: 46 f., esp. 47, n. 1; Heil, *Der konstantinische Patriziat*, pp. 117-19. The senate, fearing the civil war that must take place if eastern forces tried to reinstate Nepos, were probably quite happy to reconcile themselves to Odovacar, especially since his army, which would have to be given land in Italy, must have been quite small; cf. Demougeot, *Klio* LX (1978): 376. Odovacar's respectful attitude toward the senate of Rome is discussed below.

44. Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, p. 320.

45. *Italy and Her Invaders* II: 527. Our source for all this is Malch. frg. 10.

46. J.P.C. Kent, *Corolla memoriae Erich Swoboda dedicata*, pp. 146-50, argues from numismatic evidence for a "nominal second reign" of Nepos. Cf. Wilkes, *Dalmatia*, p. 421.

47. Cf. the scholars listed above, n. 43, and esp. Ensslin, *Serta Hoffileriana*, pp. 381-88.

48. Jones, *The Roman Economy*, pp. 366f. Cf. Chastagnol, *Sénat romain*, p. 42, n. 69.

49. *Theoderich der Grosse*, p. 58; cf. Heil, *Der konstantinische Patriziat*, pp. 119 f.

50. Heil, *Der konstantinische Patriziat*, pp. 120-22.

51. For a systematic examination of Odovacar's administration, civil and military, see Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, pp. 323–33.

52. Cf. Ensslin and Heil, n. 49, above.

53. Jones, *The Roman Economy*, pp. 365–74, *passim*.

54. Picotti (ASI ser. 7, IX (1928): 66 f.) remarks that, even if Zeno had acceded to Odovacar's request for the patriciate (Picotti's own view is that Zeno refused it, but chose to regard Odovacar as the patrician of Nepos), Odovacar's position as ruler of Italy would not have been improved in any legal sense.

55. Candidus, frg. 1.

56. Mommsen, *Ges. Schr.* VI: 334 f., 382 ff.; *Chron. Min.* III: 536 ff. Cf. Jones, *The Roman Economy*, pp. 365 f.; Chastagnol, *Sénat romain*, p. 55, n. 123.

57. On the caput senatus, see Stein, *Zeitschrift der Savigny Stiftung*, Roman. Abt., XLI (1920): 236–38; Chastagnol, *Sénat romain*, p. 54. The Colosseum seats: *ibid.*, pp. 44–56. More generally, see Bury, *Later Roman Empire* I: 409; Sundwall, *Abhandlungen*, pp. 178–89; Nagl, *RE* XVII: 1890, 1892; Picotti, *RSI*, ser. 5, vol. IV (1939): 380–82; Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, p. 326; Stein, *Bas-Empire* II: 43–46; Jones, *Later Roman Empire* I: 253 f.

58. Cf. Kraus, *Die Münzen Odovacars*, pp. 46–62, where a neat but dubious periodization is supplied for the coinage of Odovacar. Cf. Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, p. 326; Stein, *Bas-Empire* II: 43 f., 48 f.; Chastagnol, *Sénat romain*, p. 53. Most of these coins are, however, rejected as forgeries by Hahn, *Moneta imperii byzantini* I: 77, n. 1.

59. Procop. *Goth.* 1. 1. 5–8. On the details of this settlement, see Sundwall, *Abhandlungen*, pp. 178 f.; Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, pp. 326 f.; Stein, *Bas-Empire* II: 42 f.; Picotti, *RSI*, ser. 5, vol. IV (1939): 379 f.; Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans*, chap. 3, *passim*. Goffart proposes a complete reinterpretation of the evidence concerning this and other instances of barbarian settlement. Instead of the traditional view that the barbarians were given one-third (or some other fraction) of the lands and buildings, slaves and livestock confiscated from their Roman owners (a confiscation which would have been absolutely devastating), he suggests that, in the areas where barbarians were to be settled, they were allocated a fraction of existing tax assessments and the revenues they yielded. These would henceforth be collected directly by the barbarian to whom they were due, rather than by the government bureaucracy; thus the barbarians would receive a sort of salary, or “living,” but the landowners would be no worse off than before. The barbarians would take possession of the actual

lands, buildings, etc., only if the owner failed to pay his dues or arranged to acquit himself of them in perpetuity by relinquishing a portion of his holdings.

60. Vict. Vit. 1. 14.

61. *Cons. Ital.* s.a. 481, 482; Cassiod. *Chron.* s.a. 481.

62. Mommsen, *Ges. Schr.* VI: 401 f. Cf. Bury, *Later Roman Empire* I: 409, n. 4; Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, p. 324; Stein, *Bas-Empire* II: 50 f.

63. Mommsen, *Ges. Schr.* VI: 444; Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, pp. 323, 327 f.

64. Stein (*Bas-Empire* II: 41) estimates plausibly that the number of men at his disposal cannot have exceeded fifteen thousand.

65. Vict. Vit. 1. 14; Clover, "Geiseric the Statesman," pp. 212-14.

66. *Cons. Ital.* s.a. 476; *Chron. Caesaraug.* s.a. 473 (*Chron. Min.* II, 222); Isid. *Hist.* 34 (*Chron. Min.* II, 281); Jord. *Get.* 47. 244; Procop. *Goth.* 1. 12. 20. Cf. Nagl, *RE* XVII (1937): 1894; Stein, *Bas-Empire* II: 49, n. 4.

67. Cf. John Ant. frg. 214. 7: "ἔγνω [i.e. Zeno] τοῦτον [i.e. Odovacar] πρὸς τὴν Ἰλλοῦ συμμαχίαν παρασκευαζόμενον." Odovacar had already declined an alliance with Illus in 484. Cf. Bury, *Later Roman Empire* I: 394 ff., 410; Nagl, *RE* XVII: 1893.

68. This is the interpretation favored by Schmidt (*Ostgermanen*, pp. 122, 335), though he does not expand upon precisely how an attack on the East at this juncture might have served Odovacar "zur Befestigung seiner Herrschaft."

69. Stein, *Bas-Empire* II: 52 f., suggests reasons for such suspicions.

70. *Vit. Sev.* 44; John Ant. frg. 214. 7; Anon. Val. 48; *Cons. Ital.* s.a. 487; Cassiod. *Chron.* 1316.

71. Mommsen, *Ges. Schr.* VI: 382 ff.; *Chron. Min.* III: 538 f.; Sundwall, *Abhandlungen*, pp. 185 ff.; Stein, *Bas-Empire* II: 54; Degraasi, *I fasti consolari*, p. 95; McCormick, *Byzantium* XLVII (1977): 215-22. I am following McCormick's interpretation of the words of John Ant. frg. 214.7; the more traditional interpretation of "ἀποπροσποιησάμενος" would make Zeno refuse the gifts of Odovacar. Cf., however, Gordon's translation (*The Age of Attila*, p. 182): "Zeno then rejected these allies of his and rejoiced in what had been done."

72. Malch. frg. 18. On Theoderic's origin and career prior to the invasion of Italy, see Nagl, *RE* VA: 1745-53; Ensslin, *Theoderich*, pp. 7-57; *PLRE* II: 1077 ff.; Wolfram, *Geschichte der Goten*, pp. 335-46.

73. Anon. Val. 49 (“mittens eum ad Italiam”) seems to give the initiative to Zeno, though a Gothic version (Jordanes *Get.* 289) has Theoderic proposing the expedition; cf. Nagl, *RE* VA: 1753. Zeno’s commission to Theoderic is discussed at greater length below.

74. Ennod. *Pan.* 25, *Vit. Epiph.* 109.

75. John Ant. frg. 214a (*FHG* V: 29). Cf. Bury, *Later Roman Empire* I: 424; Ensslin, *RE* VA: 1615; idem, *Theoderich*, pp. 67, 69; Stein, *Bas-Empire* II: 55 f.; Heil, *Der konstantinische Patriziat*, p. 122. These scholars tend to accept the date of 490 proposed by Sundwall, *Abhandlungen*, p. 187. Schmidt, on the other hand (*Ostgermanen*, p. 335), feels that this move was made at a much earlier stage, possibly in 480, with Zeno’s full approval, and represents an attempt to arrange the succession to Odovacar’s position.

76. Ennod. *Pan.* 30.

77. Heil, *Der konstantinische Patriziat*, p. 122. Cf. Ensslin, *Rhein. Mus.* XCII (1944): 271.

78. “τὴν τυραννίδα ἐς τὴν ἐκρατύνετο δέκα” (*Goth.* I. I. 8).

79. Cf. Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders* III: 129.

80. “Cui [i.e. Zeno] Theodericus pactuatus est, ut, si victus fuisset Odoachar, pro merito laborum suorum loco eius, dum adveniret, tantum praeregneret” (Anon. Val. 49). Cf. Paul Diac. *HR* 15. 14; Jord. *Get.* 291. On the interpretation of the Anon. Val. passage, see Baynes, *EHR* XLIV (1929): 461 f.; Ensslin, *Rhein. Mus.* XCII (1944): 270 f.

81. The thorny question of the legal foundation of Theoderic’s rule in Italy is discussed by, among others, Mommsen, *Ges. Schr.* VI: 444-47, 478; Bury, *Later Roman Empire* I: 453-59; Baynes, *JRS* XII (1922): 228 f.; Stein, *Rhein. Mus.* LXXIV (1925): 390, esp. n. 2; idem, *Bas-Empire* II: 40, 117; Picotti, *ASI*, ser. 7, IX (1928): 71 f.; Ensslin, *Klio* XXIX (1936): 243; idem, *Rhein. Mus.* XCII (1944): 270 f.; idem, *Theoderich*, p. 75; Jones, *The Roman Economy*, pp. 365-74, *passim*; Heil, *Der konstantinische Patriziat*, p. 82; Wolfram, *Geschichte der Goten*, pp. 353-61.

82. After Theoderic’s acclamation as king in 493, the same source begins to style him “rex” (Anon. Val. 49-94, *passim*). Cf. Ensslin, *Rhein. Mus.* XCII (1944): 278, *Theoderich*, p. 75.

83. “. . . et mittens legationem Theodericus Festum caput senati ad Zenonem imperatorem et ab eodem sperans vestem se induere regiam” (Anon. Val. 53).

84. Anon. Val. 57; cf. Sundwall, *Abhandlungen*, pp. 118, 191 f. It remains quite uncertain whether Faustus Albinus, who was western consul for 493 and received recognition in the East, was nominated by Odovacar or Theoderic; for two conflicting views, cf. Mommsen, *Ges. Schr.* VI: 386 (but cf. 335); Sundwall, *Abhandlungen*, p. 192 (followed by Ensslin, *Theoderich*, p.74).

85. Anon. Val. 57. Cf. Jord. *Get.* 295; Ensslin, *Rhein. Mus.* XCII (1944): 278-80.

86. Cf. Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, pp. 292 f.; Ensslin, *Theoderich*, pp. 74 f.; Heil, *Der konstantinische Patriziat*, pp. 123 f.

87. Cf. the words used by Anon. Val. 57 in referring to the acclamation of Theoderic by his followers: “Gothi sibi confirmaverunt Theodericum regem non exspectantes iussionem novi principis.” Theoderic, then, had been hoping to receive the kingship from the hand of Anastasius.

88. Anon. Val. 64. Cf. Theodor Lector, 2. 16 f.

89. *Italy and Her Invaders* III: 393.

90. Cf. Baynes, *JRS* XII (1922): 229; Ensslin, *Klio* XXIX (1936): 249.

91. Jones (*The Roman Economy*, p. 369) argues that “Italy was not, even in the most formal sense, a part of the empire under Theoderic.” It seems more probable, however, that, in order to conciliate them, Theoderic permitted the Romans of Italy to consider themselves as in some way still citizens of the empire, and that some of them, at least, liked to do so and were not actively discouraged therefrom is shown by the continued nomination of consuls, who were recognized in the East, and also, incidentally, by one of the inscriptions cited by Jones, *ibid.*, which begins: “Salvis dominis nostris Anastasio perpetuo Augusto et gloriosissimo ac triumphali viro Theoderico.” As for Theoderic’s own sentiments toward the empire, they were probably similar to those of Ricimer, which have been compared to the feelings of a present-day African or Indian toward the Commonwealth; the Roman Empire had less and less immediate political significance for Italy, and was viewed more as a cultural union, and as such it seems to have held a strong attraction for Theoderic. In general, on the view the kings of the Germanic successor-states took of “Romania,” see the provocative article by H. Wolfram, “The Shaping of the Early Medieval Kingdom,” *Viator* I (1970): 1-20.

Abbreviations

A. Ancient Authors

- Amb. *De ob. Theod.* *Sancti Ambrosii de obitu Theodosii*, ed. Otto Faller. CSEL LXXIII (1955): 369-401.
- Amb. *De ob. Val.* *Sancti Ambrosii de obitu Valentiniani*, ed. Otto Faller. CSEL LXXIII (1955): 327-67.
- Amb. *Ep.* *Sancti Ambrosii epistolae*. PL XVI (1845): 875-1286. *Ep.* 17, 18, 57, ed. Richard Klein, *Der Streit um den Victoriaaltar* (Darmstadt, 1972), pp. 116-71.
- Amm. Marc. Ammianus Marcellinus, *Römische Geschichte*, ed. Wolfgang Seyfarth. 4 vols. Berlin, 1968-71.
- Ann. Rav. *Annali Ravennati*. Bernhard Bischoff & Wilhelm Koehler. "Un' edizione illustrata degli Annali Ravennati del basso impero." *Studi Romagnoli* III (1952): 1-17.
- Anon. Val. *Excerpta Valesiana*, ed. Jacques Moreau and Velizar Velkow. Teubner, 2d ed., 1968.
- August. *De civ. Dei* *Sancti Aurelii Augustini de civitate Dei. Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina* XLVII-XLVIII (1955).
- August. *Ep.* *S. Aureli Augustini Epistulae*, ed. Al. Goldbacher. CSEL XXXIV, XLIV, LVII, LVIII (1895-1923).

- Candidus frg. 1 Photius, *Bibliothèque*, ed. René Henry, (Budé, 1959) I: 161-66.
- Cassiod. *Chron.* Cassiodori Senatoris chronica. *Chron. Min.* II, 111-61.
- Cassiod. *Var.* Magni Aurelii Cassiodori variarum libri XII, ed. Åke Fridh. *Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina* XCVI (1973): 1-499.
- Chron. Gall.* Chronica Gallica, *Chron. Min.* I: 615-66.
- Chron. Pasch.* Chronicon Paschale, ed. Ludwig Dindorf. CSHB XVI-XVII, 1832.
- Claud. Claudii Claudiani Carmina, ed. Julius Koch. Teubner, 1893.
The works of Claudian cited, with abbreviations used, are:
- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| <i>Bell. Goth.</i> | <i>De bello Gothico</i> |
| <i>Bell. Gild.</i> | <i>Bellum Gildonicum</i> |
| <i>Carm. min.</i> | <i>Carmina minora</i> |
| III Cons. Hon. | <i>De tertio consulatu Honorii</i> |
| IV Cons. Hon. | <i>De quarto consulatu Honorii</i> |
| VI Cons. Hon. | <i>De sexto consulatu Honorii</i> |
| <i>Cons. Stil.</i> | <i>De consulatu Stilichonis</i> |
| <i>In Eutr.</i> | <i>In Eutropium</i> |
| <i>In Ruf.</i> | <i>In Rufinum</i> |
| <i>Laus Ser.</i> | <i>Laus Serenae (Carm. min. 30)</i> |
| <i>Nupt.</i> | <i>Epithalamium de nuptiis Honorii</i> |
- Cod. Theod. Codex Theodosianus, ed. Theodor Mommsen and Paul M. Meyer. 2 vols. Berlin, 1904-5.
- Coll. Avell. *Epistulae imperatorum pontificum aliorum: avellana quae dicitur collectio*, ed. Otto Günther. CSEL XXXV, pt. 1 (1895); pt. 2 (1898).
- Cons. Const. Consularia Constantinopolitana. *Chron. Min.* I: 197-247.
- Cons. Ital. Consularia Italica. *Chron. Min.* I: 249-339.
- Ennod. Pan. Ennodi Panegyricus Theoderico regi dictus, ed. Friedrich Vogel. MGH: AA VII (1885): 203-14.
- Ennod. Vit. Epiph. Ennodi vita Epifani episcopi ticinensis, ed. Friedrich Vogel. MGH: AA VII (1885): 84-109.
- Epiphan. De mens. et pond. S.P.N. Epiphanius de mensuris et ponderibus liber. PG XLIII (1858): 257-94.
- Eunap. Eunapii fragmenta. HGM I: 205-74. Frg. 59 appears also as no. 57 on p. 91 of *Excerpta de Sententiis*, ed. U.Ph. Boissvain,

- Berlin, 1906 (vol. IV of *Excerpta historica iussu imp. Constantini Porphyrogeniti confecta*).
- Evagr. *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius*, ed. J. Bidez and L. Parmentier. London, 1898.
- Fredegar *Chronicarum quae dicuntur Fredegarii Scholastici libri IV*, ed. Bruno Krusch. MGH: SRM II (1888): 1-168.
- Gesta de purgatione Xysti* "Concilium romanum a Sixto pontifice ad sui expurgationem indictum et congregatum." *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* V: 1061-68.
- Gildas *Gildas; the Ruin of Britain and other Works*, ed. Michael Winterbottom. London, 1978, pp. 87-142.
- Greg. Tur. *HF* Gregor von Tours, *Zehn Bücher Geschichten*, ed. Rudolf Buchner. Berlin, [1956].
- Hydat. Hydace, *Chronique*, ed. Alain Tranoy. SC, nos. 218, 219 (1974).
- Jerome *Ep.* Saint Jérôme, *Lettres*, ed. Jérôme Labourt. 8 vols. Budé, 1949-63.
- John Ant. *Johannis Antiocheni fragmenta*. FHG IV (1851): 535-622; V (1883): 27-38. Almost all fragments cited in the present work appear also in *Excerpta de Insidiis*, ed. C. de Boor, Berlin, 1905 (vol. III of *Excerpta historica iussu imp. Constantini Porphyrogeniti confecta*); reference is facilitated by the index on pp. 229-32 of de Boor.
- Jord. *Get.* *Jordanis de origine actibusque Getarum*, ed. Theodor Mommsen. MGH: AA V (1882): 53-138.
- Jord. *Rom.* *Jordanis de summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, ed. Theodor Mommsen. MGH: AA V (1882) 1-52.
- Landulf Sag. *Landolfi Sagacis historia romana*, ed. Amedeo Crivellucci. *Fonti per la storia d'Italia*, nos. 49, 50. Rome, 1912.
- Laterc. Imper.* *Laterculus imperatorum ad Iustinum I.* *Chron. Min.* III: 418-23.
- Libanius *Ep.* *Libanii epistulae*, ed. R. Foerster. Teubner 1921-22.
- Liber promissionum et praedictorum Dei Opera Quodvultdeo Carthaginiensi episcopo tributa*, ed. R. Braun. *Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina* LX (1976): 1-223.

- Lydus *Mag.* *Joannis Lydi de magistratibus populi Romani Libri tres*, ed. Richard Wünsch. Teubner, 1903.
- Malal. *Joannis Malalae chronographia*, ed. Ludwig Dindorf. CSHB XV (1831).
- Malch. *Malchi fragmenta*. HGM I: 383-424. All fragments cited in the present work appear also in *Excerpta de Legationibus*, ed. C. de Boor, Berlin, 1903 (vol. I of *Excerpta historica iussu imp. Constantini Porphyrogeniti confecta*); reference is facilitated by the index on pp. 601-7 of de Boor.
- Mar. Aven. *Chron.* *Marii episcopi Aventicensis chronica*. *Chron. Min.* II: 225-39.
- Marcell. *Marcellini V.C. Comitis chronicon*. *Chron. Min.* II: 37-104.
- Merob. *Carm.*; *Pan.* *Merobaudes, Carmina; Panegyrics*. *Fl. Merobaudis reliquiae*, ed. Friedrich Vollmer. MGH: AA XIV (1905): 1-20.
- Mich. Syr. *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, ed. and trans. Jean-Baptiste Chabot. Paris, 1899-1924.
- Niceph. *Nicephori Callisti ecclesiasticae historiae libri XVIII*. PG CXLV (1865): 557-1332; CXLVI (1865): 9-1274; CXLVII (1865): 9-448.
- Not. Dig. *Notitia Dignitatum*, ed. Otto Seeck. Berlin, 1876.
- Nov. Maior. *Leges novellae Maioriani*. *Cod. Theod.* II: 155-78.
- Nov. Sev. *Leges novellae Severi*. *Cod. Theod.* II: 199-202.
- Nov. Val. *Leges novellae Valentiniani*. *Cod. Theod.* II: 69-154.
- Olympiod. *Olympiodori fragmenta*. HGM I: 450-72. The fragments of Olympiod. are found unnumbered in Photius, *Bibliothèque*, ed. René Henry (Budé, 1959) I: 166-87.
- Oros. *Pauli Orosii historiarum adversum paganos libri VII*, ed. Karl Zangemeister. Teubner, 1889.
- Pan. Lat.* *XII panegyrici Latini*, ed. R.A.B. Mynors. Oxford Classical Texts, 1964.
- Paul Diac. HR *Pauli Diaconi historia romana*, ed. Amedeo Crivellucci. *Fonti per la storia d'Italia*, no. 51. Rome, 1914.
- Paul. Mil. Vit. Amb. *Paolino di Milano, Vita di S. Ambrogio*, ed. Michele Pellegrino. Rome, 1961.
- Paul. Nola. *Carm.* *Sancti Pontii Meropii Paulini Nolani carmina*, ed. Guilelmus de Hartel. CSEL XXX (1894).

- Philostorg. Philostorgius, *Kirchengeschichte*, ed. J. Bidez and F. Winkelmann. GCS 1972.
- Prisc. *Prisci fragmenta*. HGM I, 275-352. Almost all fragments cited in the present work appear also in *Excerpta de Legationibus*, ed. C. de Boor, Berlin, 1903 (vol. I of *Excerpta historica iussu imp. Constantini Porphyrogeniti confecta*); reference is facilitated by the index on pp. 601-7 of de Boor.
- Procop. *Procopii Caesariensis opera omnia*, ed. Jacob Haury and Gerhard Wirth. 4 vols. Teubner, 1962-64. The works of Procopius cited, with abbreviations used, are:
- | | |
|-------|---------------------------|
| Goth. | <i>De bello Gothico</i> |
| Vand. | <i>De bello Vandalico</i> |
- Prosp. *Prosperi Tironis epitoma chronicon*. Chron. Min. I: 341-485.
- Prudent. C. Symm. Prudentius, *Contra Symmachum*, ed. Maurice Cunningham. *Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina* CXXVI (1966): 182-250.
- Pseud. August. Ep. Pseudo-Augustine, *Epistles*. PL XXXIII (1865): 1095-98.
- Pseud. Aur. Vict. Epit. *Incerti Auctoris epitome de Caesaribus*, ed. Franz Pichlmayr and R. Gruendel. Sextus Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus* (Teubner, 1970), pp. 131-76.
- Pseud. Bon. Ep. Pseudo-Boniface, *Epistles*. PL XXXIII (1865): 1095-98.
- Rufin. HE Rufinus of Aquileia, *Continuation of Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History*, ed. Eduard Schwartz and Theodor Mommsen. *Eusebius Werke* II, 2: 957-1040. GCS, 1908.
- Rut. Namat. Rutilius Claudius Namatianus, *De reditu suo sive iter Gallicum*, ed. Ernst Doblhofer. Heidelberg, 1972.
- Salv. Gub. Dei Salvian, *De gubernatione Dei*, ed. Georges Lagarrigue. SC, no. 220 (1975).
- Sid. Apoll. Carm. Sidoine Apollinaire, tome I, *Poèmes*, ed. André Loyen. Budé, 1960.
- Sid. Apoll. Ep. Sidoine Apollinaire, tomes II & III, *Lettres*, ed. André Loyen. Budé, 1970.
- Socrat. HE *Socratis scholastici historia ecclesiastica*. PG LXVII (1859): 29-842.
- Sozom. Sozomenus *Kirchengeschichte*, ed. Joseph Bidez and Günther Christian Hansen. GCS, 1960.

- Symm. *Ep.* *Q. Aurelii Symmachi epistulae*, ed. Otto Seeck. MGH: AA VI, 1 (1883): 1-278.
- Symm. *Rel.* Symmachus, *Relationes. Rel.* 3, ed. Richard Klein, *Der Streit um den Victoriaaltar* (Darmstadt, 1972), pp. 98-113.
- Synesius *de Regno* *Synesii Cyrenensis opuscula*, ed. Nicolaus Terzaghi (Rome, 1944) pp. 5-62.
- Theodor Lector *Excerpta ex ecclesiastica historia Theodori Lectoris*. PG LXXXVI, 1 (1865): 165-216.
- Theodoret *HE* Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History*, ed. L. Parmentier and F. Scheidweiler. GCS, no. 44 (1954).
- Theophan. *Theophanis chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor. Teubner, 1883.
- Vict. Tonn. *Victoris Tonnennensis episcopi chronica. Chron. Min.* II: 163-206.
- Vict. Vit. *Victoris episcopi vitensis historia persecutionis Africanae provinciae*, ed. Michael Petschenig. CSEL VII (1881).
- Vit. Germ. Constance de Lyon, *Vie de Saint Germain d'Auxerre*, ed. René Borius. SC, no. 112 (1965).
- Vit. Sev. Eugippius, *Das Leben des Heiligen Severin*, ed. Rudolf Noll. Berlin, 1963.
- Zos. Zosime, *Histoire Nouvelle*, ed. François Paschoud. Budé, 1971-. At the time of going to press, it was still necessary to use the Mendelssohn edition for book V, Teubner 1887.

B. Collections

- Budé Collection des Univ. de France, publiée sous le patronage de l'Assoc. Guillaume Budé, Paris.
- Chron. Min.* *Chronica Minora*, ed. Theodor Mommsen. 3 vols. MGH: AA IX (1892), XI (1894), XIII (1898).
- *Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina*. 180 vols. Turnhout (Belgium), 1953-.
- CIL* *Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum*. Berlin, 1863-.
- CSEL* *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*. Vienna, 1866-.

CSHB	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae</i> . 50 vols. Bonn, 1828-97.
de Rossi, <i>Inscriptiones Christianae</i> , n.s.	<i>Inscriptiones Christianae urbis Romae septimo saeculo antiquiores</i> , ed. Giovanni-Battista de Rossi, et al. Nova series. Rome, 1922-.
FHG	<i>Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum</i> , ed. Carl Müller. 5 vols. Paris, 1841-84.
GCS	<i>Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte</i> . Berlin and Leipzig.
HGM	<i>Historici Graeci Minores</i> , ed. Ludwig Dindorf. Teubner, 1870-71.
ILS	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i> , ed. Hermann Dessau. 3 vols. Berlin, 1892-1916.
————	<i>Le Liber Pontificalis</i> , ed. Louis Duchesne. 2d ed. 3 vols. Paris, 1955-57.
MGH: AA	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Auctores Antiquissimi</i> . 15 vols. Berlin, 1877-1919.
MGH: Ep.	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Epistolae</i> . 8 vols. Berlin, 1887-1939.
MGH: SRM	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum</i> . 7 vols. Hanover, 1885-1919.
PG	<i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Graeca</i> , ed. Jacques-Paul Migne. 161 vols. Paris, 1857-66.
PL	<i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Latina</i> , ed. Jacques-Paul Migne. 221 vols. Paris, 1878-87.
————	<i>Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio</i> , ed. Joannes Dominicus Mansi et al. 31 vols. [n.p.], 1758-98.
SC	Sources Chrétiennes. Paris, 1942-.
Teubner	Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana, Leipzig.

C. Periodicals and Reference Works

A. Ant. Hung.	<i>Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae</i>
AHR	<i>American Historical Review</i>

AJP	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
ASI	<i>Archivio storico italiano</i>
Athenaeum	<i>Athenaeum: Studi periodici di letteratura e storia dell'antichità</i> , Pavia
CP	<i>Classical Philology</i>
EHR	<i>English Historical Review</i>
HThR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
JRS	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
NRS	<i>Nuova rivista storica</i>
PLRE	<i>Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i> . Vol. I, ed. A.H.M. Jones, J.R. Martindale, and J. Morris (Cambridge, 1971). Vol. II, ed. J.R. Martindale (Cambridge, 1980).
RAC	Theodor Klauser et al., eds. <i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i> , Stuttgart, 1950–
RE	Georg Wissowa, Wilhelm Kroll, et al. <i>Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> , rev. ed. Stuttgart, 1894–.
REA	<i>Revue des études anciennes</i>
Rhein. Mus.	<i>Rheinisches Museum für Philologie</i>
Riv. Fil.	<i>Rivista di filologia e di istruzione classica</i>
RSI	<i>Rivista storica italiana</i>
TAPA	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>

Translations

A. Greek Quotations

- p. 17 τρεῖς δὲ . . . : Having been general for twenty-three years.
- p. 34 καὶ ῥᾶστα . . . : [Stilicho] would very easily have destroyed [the Visigoths] due to their shortage of provisions if he had not given himself up to wantonness, comedians, and loose women, permitting his troops to loot whatever the barbarians had left, and allowing the enemy a wide-open passage to escape from the Peloponnese with all their booty and to cross to Epirus and plunder the cities there. When Stilicho saw that this was what they had done, he sailed off to Italy, having achieved nothing.
- p. 44 τῶν δὲ . . . : After this successful outcome of events, Theodosius proceeded to Rome. There he declared his son Honorius an emperor; he also designated Stilicho general of the troops stationed there and at the same time left him as tutor for his son.
- p. 45 καταστάς . . . : appointed tutor of the children Arcadius and Honorius by their very father, Theodosius the Great.

- p. 49 ἔλεγε. . . : He said that he had been instructed by the dying Theodosius to give his full attention to the affairs of both emperors.
- p. 68 ἐφίσταται. . . : “Distress came over Constantius, and he regretted the emperorship because it was no longer possible for him to come and go safely, where and how he wished, and because as emperor he could no longer enjoy the pastimes which he had been accustomed to enjoy. Finally, after a seven months’ reign . . . he died of pleurisy.”—trans. by C.D. Gordon, *The Age of Attila*, p. 44.
- p. 87 παρὰ . . . : from Aetius and the emperor of the western Romans.
- p. 138 ἱκανὸν. . . : who was competent to protect their interests, for he possessed both political and military skill.
- p. 139 πατρικίου. . . : to award him the honor of patrician and turn over to him the government of Italy.
- p. 171 Ὀνόριος . . . : “Honorius, taking her by the hand, handed her over completely against her will to Constantius.”—trans. by C.D. Gordon, *The Age of Attila*, p. 43.
- p. 193 κατὰ πρεσβείαν . . . : in response to an embassy from the senate of Rome.
- p. 196 ταυτά. . . : When he proved absolutely unwilling to do this, they killed him immediately.
- p. 199 ἔγνω. . . : Zeno realized that Odovacar was preparing to make an alliance with Illus.
- p. 200 τὴν τυραννίδα. . . : He maintained his tyranny for ten years.

B. Latin Quotations

- p. 26 . . . SIC GESSIT . . . : He so wore his distinctions that, however great the honors the emperor conferred on him, they might have been greater still.

- p. 26 . . . SI BELLICA . . . : If war threatened, one had the spectacle of time-honored generals of horse and foot deferring to one who was their junior in years and rank, and openly yielding the supreme command to him; no consideration of rank or age inhibited the obedience shown the young man by his seniors.
- p. 27 HAUD ALITER . . . : Thus, when the tempest of war raged in Thrace, all the others deferred to Stilicho, and he was chosen sole commander.
- p. 30 MENS EADEM . . . : They all shared the same sentiments and cast off their recent grudges; the victor did not flaunt his supremacy, nor did the vanquished bear resentment. In spite of the present unrest, the recent civil war, and the bellicose passions still raging, they were inspired with the same enthusiasm for their splendid leader.
- p. 30 SECERNIQUE . . . : They refuse to be divided and demand the battle of which they have been deprived. Both easterners and westerners rally in support of their outstanding leader and each group calls him their own. It is a contest of affection, and a far from blameworthy spirit of mutiny undermines their morale as they protest in the following terms.
- p. 30 . . . QUID . . . : Why do you divide blood-brothers? Why do you break up an army with a tradition of solidarity? We are a single body and cannot be divided.
- p. 35 NIL INTER . . . : No group in the twin army dared take any liberties. . . . In this great throng, with its assortment of languages and races, there reigned such good order and respect for discipline, thanks to [Stilicho's] control, that no farmer was deprived of the produce of vineyard or field through theft, and bloodshed and rape were unknown.
- p. 38 . . . NASCENTIA . . . : He quelled hostilities that were brewing; he sought reinforcements and enrolled eager volunteers, keeping their numbers within sensible limits so

that they should not be a burden to Italy or a source of anxiety to their commander.

- p. 38 . . . GENS ROBORE . . . : Our nation was strong even when we had no allies to rely on. Now that the Illyrians have put their government in my hands and made me their leader, I have acquired, thanks to Thracian labor, a vast quantity of missiles, swords, and helmets, and for my purposes I have forced Roman towns to turn over revenues, to which I am fully entitled, in the form of iron.
- p. 40 IPSUM TE . . . : He would have captured you yourself, Alaric, and put you to death, had not the over-eagerness of the rash Alans upset his careful plan.
- p. 49 UT VENTUM . . . : When they came to his chamber, the emperor ordered everyone to leave the room and, unprompted, addressed his son-in-law in these words.
- p. 50 ILLUMQUE . . . : And you recalled the day when, in his uncertainty and fear at the unstable situation, the dying father committed his child to your fostering care.
- p. 76 QUIA . . . : Because it was apparent that John could not have seized power without his connivance.
- p. 81 FL (AVIO) . . . : Dedicated to Flavius Aetius, illustris, comes . . . and also magister militum per Gallias, which region, on account of victories pledged in war and peace, he has now restored to Roman rule, magister utriusque militiae, second consul ordinarius and patrician, always devoted to the republic, adorned with every military honor. . . .
- p. 87 AETIUS . . . : Aetius, who ruled the republic at that time.
- p. 106 RICIMER . . . : Ricimer the magister militum, was made patrician on 28 February, and Majorian was made magister militum on the same day.
- p. 109 ERIT APUD . . . : "The watchful care of military affairs will be Our concern, as well as the concern of Our Father, the Patrician, Ricimer. With the assistance of a propitious

Divinity, We shall preserve the status of the Roman world, which by Our common vigilance We have freed both from the external enemy and from internal disaster.” —trans. by Clyde Pharr, *The Theodosian Code*, p. 551.

- p. 111 **ABROGATIS . . . :** “The abrogation of the unjust chapters of the law of the sainted Majorian Augustus. We retain from the aforesaid law only the provision that is commended by the authority of the ancient laws.” —trans. by Clyde Pharr, *The Theodosian Code*, p. 568.
- p. 112 **BEORGOR . . . :** Beorgor, king of the Alans, was killed by Ricimer the king.
- p. 113 **AUXERAT . . . :** Following nature’s law, the emperor Severus joined the ranks of the gods.
- p. 120 **RICIMER . . . :** Ricimer, who then ruled the republic as subordinate of the emperor Anthemius.
- p. 155 **EUGENIUM . . . :** He soon ventured to make Eugenius tyrant, conferring the title of emperor on a man of his own choice, and intending to wield the power himself, barbarian though he was.
- p. 162 **POST OTIA . . . :** You instructed him, after restoring peace in Gaul, to save Greece from ruin.
- p. 164 **PUGNANTES . . . :** We won the battle but had our victory snatched from us.
- p. 164 **POLLENTIAE . . . :** At Pollentia a fierce battle was fought against the Goths, with slaughter on both sides.
- p. 164 **ADSUNT . . . :** Uldin and Sarus, the leaders of the Huns and Goths, fought on the Roman side.
- p. 166 **CONCLUDITUR . . . :** On concludes that, before the death of Rufinus, Stilicho would not even have dared to support his ambition with a patent fiction about the last words of Theodosius.

- p. 170 AUREA SIC . . . : May the fair Thermantia see a marriage like this one.
- p. 175 BONIFATIO . . . : On the instigation of Felix, the government made war on Boniface, whose power and reputation were growing in Africa, on the grounds of his refusal to return to Italy.
- p. 181 INTER . . . : The disastrous enmity between the emperor Valentinian and the patrician Aetius was healed following the swearing of an oath of friendship and the arrangement of a marriage between their offspring.
- p. 184 . . . REGNUM . . . : You are not snatching the realm from anyone, for no emperor occupies the citadel of Rome. The vacant palace could be yours.
- p. 186 RICIMERI . . . : To Ricimer, illustris, comes, and magister utriusque militiae and patrician.
- p. 186 DE EPISCOPALI . . . : "Episcopal courts; no person shall be ordained a cleric against his will; various matters." —trans. by Clyde Pharr, *The Theodosian Code*, p. 561.
- p. 186 NEPOTIANUS . . . : On Theoderic's orders Nepotian was replaced by Arborius.
- p. 188 UT DICITUR . . . : It is reported that, on the responsibility of Ricimer, Severus was killed by poison in the palace in Rome.
- p. 195 NEPOS . . . : Nepos the emperor instructed Ecdicius to leave Gaul and come to him.
- p. 195 ORESTES . . . : Orestes took the entire government into his own hands; he put his son Augustulus in Ravenna and made him emperor, but took charge himself of all defence matters.
- p. 200 CUI THEODERICUS . . . : Theoderic had an agreement with Zeno that, if Odovacar should be defeated, Theoderic, in return for his efforts, should rule in Zeno's place until such time as Zeno might come.

- p. 200 . . . ET MITTENS . . .: Theoderic sent Festus, the *caput senati*, as his envoy to the emperor Zeno, petitioning that Zeno might bestow on him the garb of a king.
- p. 201 GOTHI . . .: The Goths acclaimed Theoderic as their king without waiting for authorization from the new emperor.

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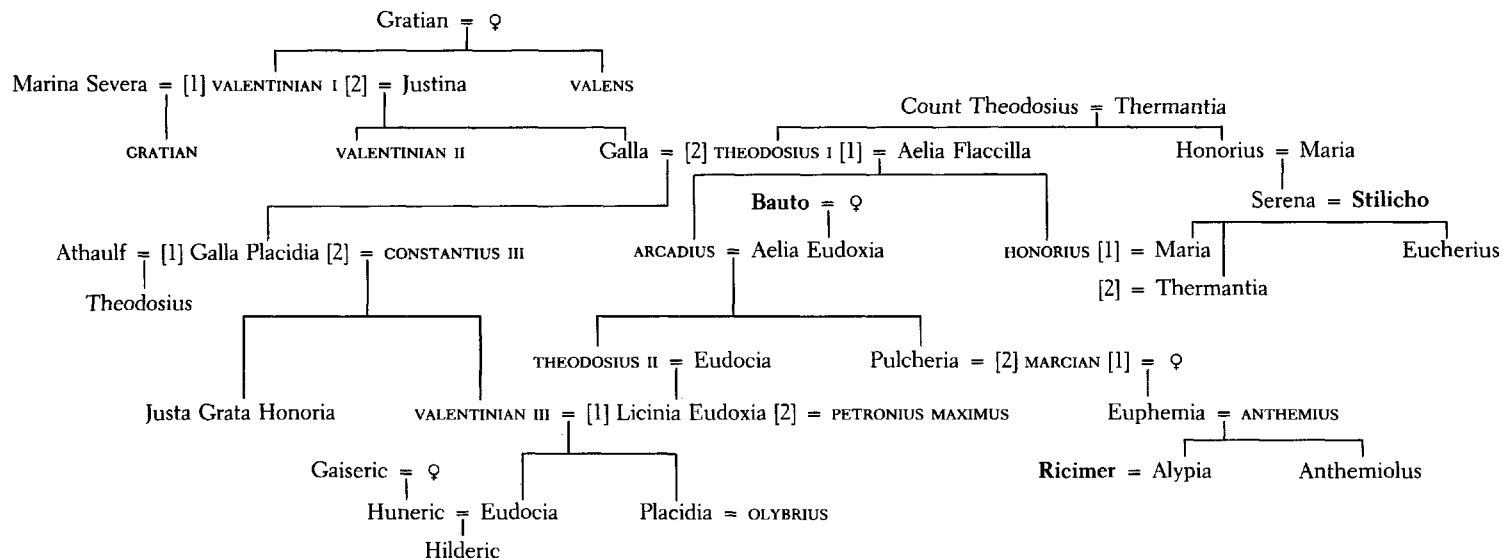
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Appendices

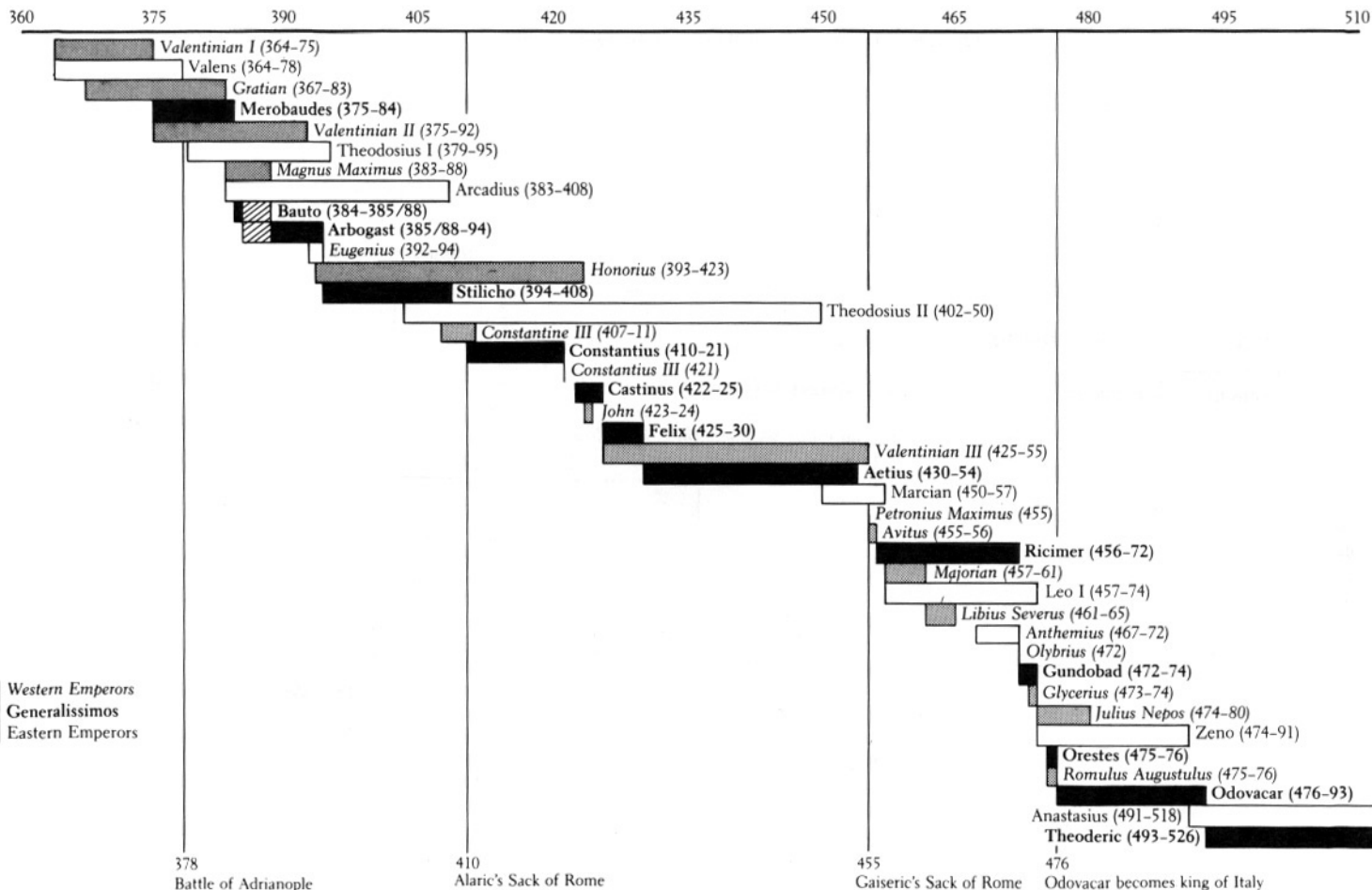
- A. The Valentinian-Theodosian Family
- B. Chronological Chart of Eastern Emperors, Western Emperors, and Generalissimos
- C. Timeline of Shifts of Power in the Eastern and Western Roman Empire

A. The Valentinian-Theodosian Family

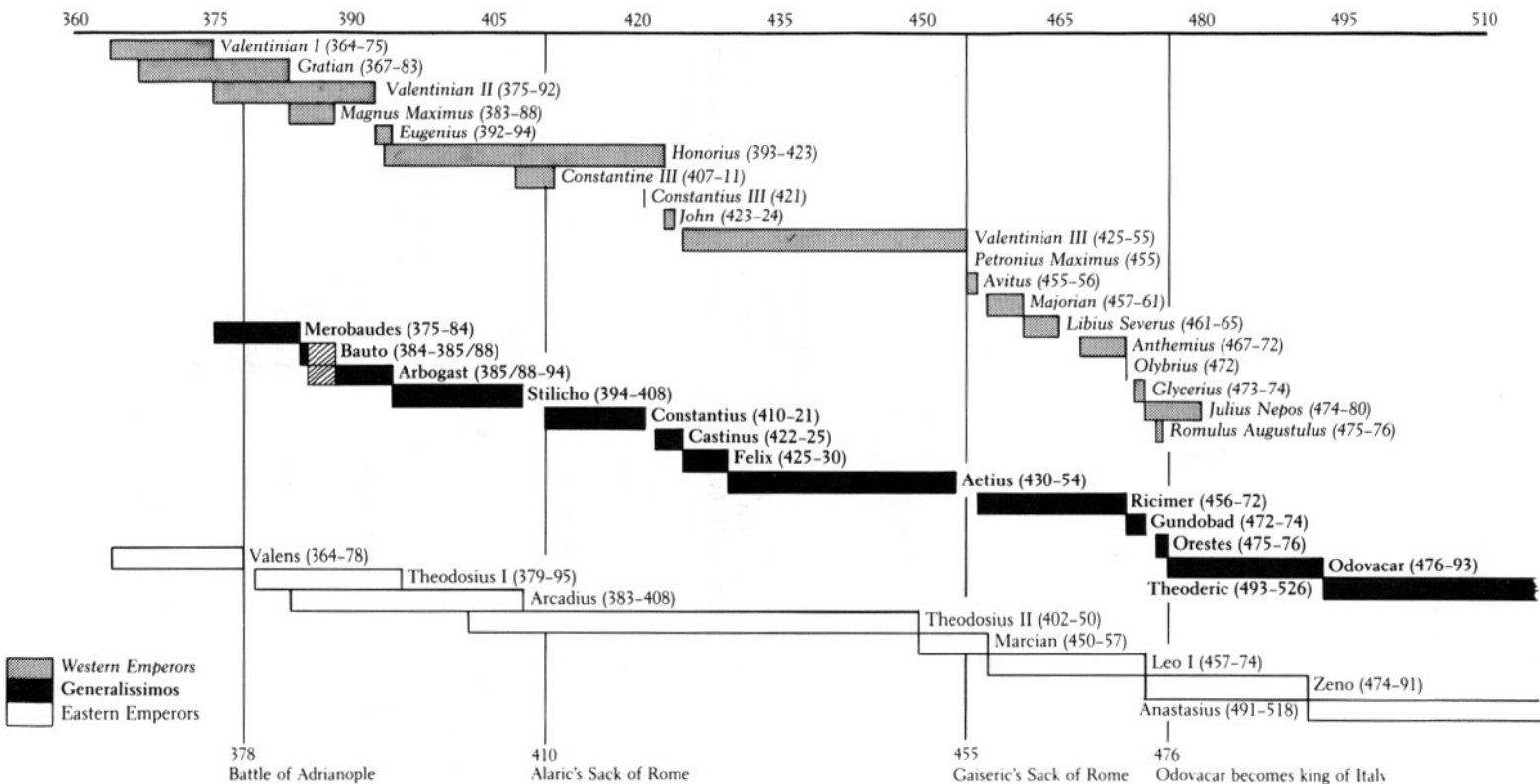


Emperors' names appear in capital letters. Generalissimos' names are in boldface. The stemma is not complete.

B. Chronological Chart of Eastern Emperors, Western Emperors, and Generalissimos



C. Timeline of Shifts of Power in the Eastern and Western Roman Empire



Only the more significant usurpers have been included. The dates given for the supremacies of certain generalissimos are, of necessity, arbitrary.

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